

WOMANDLA! *Women Power!*



The 'Herstory' of Mosaic
Rolene Miller

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WOMANDLA!

Women Power!

Rolene Miller



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Finally, but most of all I want to thank our exceptional God, our Source of All Power and Life, for sustaining us at Mosaic for the past Twenty Five Years. There are no word to adequately describe our thanks to You. Without You we would not have been able to survive and become a caring and valuable resource for healing abused women and children in our country.

I began writing *Womandla! Women Power!* many years ago. For the past two years I have focussed on my writing and editing the information. Today I am proud that this book is finally complete and for it to be 'out in the world' for interested readers to learn the lessons that we all learnt at Mosaic.

I have changed some names because of the personal nature of the disclosures. But everyone is real and is a part of our story.

Thank you Riaan Goosen, my colleague and friend and to everyone who keeps Mosaic supported and successful. I appreciate you all.

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Foreword

Many years ago I stood with Rolene on the banks of the Knysna Lagoon and listened as she described the enormity of the problem of women abuse in our country. I remember how in awe I was of this mother of twins who in her 40's had a calling to change her comfortable life and begin to make a difference to the lives of the most vulnerable. We were in the Garden Route for a Rotary Conference and there, amidst all the committed men and women, Rolene Miller somehow stood out.

I realise that what I identified in Rolene was courage. The courage that gets you from one moment to the next. The courage to believe in yourself, the courage that brings sanity and cheerfulness and hope to lives that could be utterly consumed by sorrow.

Rolene was alive and things as they were really troubled her.

From a world of remedial teaching, Rolene returned to University and completed two degrees qualifying her for work in the field of social work and counselling.

In 1993 Rolene registered the NGO, Mosaic, and began to share her newly aquired skills with disadvantaged women who wanted to help their own communities. With the assistance of psychologists and adult educationalists, Rolene drew up a fulltime one-year training course for community workers and trained and mentored 27 women to work with women and youth who experienced gender based violence and abuse. She went on to initiate the Mosaic Court Support Services in fourteen Magistrates' courts in the Western Cape and Gauteng. Together with her community workers she wrote the Protection Order Booklet for abused women called - 'It's an Order – A Simple Guide to your Rights'.

What followed was more than a decade of building Mosaic into a focused and sustainable training and healing centre for women, eventually servicing close on 100 000 people per annum.

Despite many difficult challenges, including periods of near bankruptcy, strained internal relationships, dealing with departmental bureaucracy and stakeholders operating in silos, Mosaic prevailed,

with Rolene eventually handing over the baton to a team that she had mentored.

There are not many people who can claim to have achieved what Rolene Miller has. The value of her story cannot be over emphasised. Mosaic serves as a model of how training women and men from the communities helps ensure that support services are determined both by the clients' needs and their context and are rendered in a culturally appropriate and accessible manner.

Mosaic can be regarded as a national blueprint for building financially sustainable and scalable organisations that deliver critical services to survivors of domestic violence and abuse, their children and partners. Their model of support and healing is aimed at empowering survivors to take charge of their own lives and become active, positive and thriving members of society who are capable of reaching their full potential.

By documenting her story, Rolene imparts value to other NGO's and gives us all the strength to dream that anything is possible if we live our lives fearlessly.

Sheryl Ozinsky
Chairperson of Mosaic
1998 - 2003

It is Monday the 14th of November 2017. Riaan my colleague from Mosaic calls me. He tells me that Michael, a Board Member of Mosaic and a Member of Parliament, wants us to go to Parliament tomorrow afternoon. Can I go with him?

It does not occur to me to ask him why Michael wants us to go to Parliament. I think that there is something that Michael want us to witness. I say that I am free tomorrow and I will meet him there.

On Tuesday Riaan and I are met by Michael, who signs us in.

“Do you know why you are here?” he asks me.

I have no idea.

Riaan looks at me and smiles.

Michael says that he is going to present me and Mosaic in Parliament. He is going to introduce a motion without notice which has been passed unanimously by Parliament. He wants to recognise the outstanding contribution that I have made in the establishment of Mosaic.

I am totally shocked and actually confused. Me? Mosaic?

I ask Riaan what would have happened if I had said I could not go to Parliament. He laughs and says he would have come to fetch me wherever I was.

I am overwhelmed. What an amazing tribute. I hug Michael. I thank him so much for presenting me and Mosaic’s work over the past twenty four years.

Who would have thought that something I had started on my own because a dismissive lecturer had made fun of me and my anger at the lack of facilities for deprived and abused woman, is now being honoured in Parliament? What an honour and a privilege to be recognised by Michael and Parliament today.



Michael, Riaan with me in Parliament

WOMANDLA! WOMEN POWER! is innovative and inspirational. It tells the story of how Mosaic was registered in 1993 and how unskilled grassroots women were trained in 1995 to become Mosaic community workers. These community workers then shared their acquired skills and services in disadvantaged communities on Abuse and Gender Based Violence. They supported and healed a million abused women and their families to put together the pieces of their broken lives.

The Beginning

It is the late 1980s and apartheid is in its death throes. My friend Helen tells me about her work in the Black townships. It sounds dangerous. Whites are not allowed to go into the townships. I want to know more about what she does.

I go with Helen and her friend Bev into Gugulethu. It is the first time I have ever been there. I marvel at how they know where to go and how they are unfazed by driving into areas that are prohibited to us as Whites. It is another world - it exists side by side with mine and is alien territory. I feel an element of danger in Gugulethu yet I do not feel threatened. We drive past small dilapidated brick houses and wood and iron shacks and I am riveted. I am also totally unaware that Gugulethu will become one of the main townships in which I too will later work.

Helen subsequently founds Ikamva Labantu, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) for disadvantaged people in Cape Town. I join her in working with and sharing my skills with the women of Ikamva Labantu.

It is now 1990. I am 46 years old and I am back at the University of Cape Town starting my four-year Bachelor of Social Work degree. I already have a teaching diploma and a Bachelor of Social Science degree from UCT majoring in psychology. Now I want a degree in Social Work. I am fortunate to be accepted into a wonderful group of bright young students who are slightly older than my own children and we learn so much from each other.

I am increasingly interested in working with women. The more I think about this, the more I would like to counsel women in mid-life crisis and develop services for women.

I am provoked into giving this serious consideration when one of my senior Social Work lecturers throws me the gauntlet in my first year of studies. It happens during a seminar organised by the second year students. During a discussion after a presentation on women's issues we talk about the fact that there are very few support services

available to women, especially those caught up in situations of domestic violence.

I listen quietly to the other students' contributions while something really upsets and niggles at me. I do not think it is fair that women have to pay for counselling and support services even if it is according to the sliding scale that is the policy of women's service organisations in Cape Town. In addition I am upset to think that poor women also have to pay for transport to get to these organisations and they cannot afford this. I realise how important free counselling services would be for them. I think of the counselling services available to more affluent women who can afford to pay psychologists and social workers in private practice.

Why is counselling such an exclusive and costly service? What about those thousands of poor women who need help but who cannot afford to pay anything at all?

I become more and more uncomfortable as these jumbled thoughts brew inside me. I stop listening to their discussion and I burst out with the most important question on my mind.

"Why are there no free services for women?"

The lecture theatre suddenly grows silent as all eyes are turned on me. I clearly sense that they think I am naive and their attitude is dismissive of both me, and my question. I feel uneasy and embarrassed for having spoken out.

My lecturer asks me "How do you propose to provide free services for women?"

I say with conviction "Corporates and government should fund them."

My lecturer lounges back with his arms spread casually across two seats in the lecture theatre and looks at me.

"Well", he says, "if you *want* to do it, do it."

I can feel a surge of indignation and anger rise inside me. His dismissive response and the grin on his face makes me realise that he believes that it is not realistic. I make a resolve right there and then that one day I will show him that I can do it. I will do it.

We are given options for our final year's practical placements in various organisations. NICRO (National Institute for Crime and Rehabilitation of Offenders) wants a student to work with its newly

formed Victim Care Team for Battered Women. Our lecturer asks us who would like this placement. I am the first student to shoot up my hand and my heart pounds. She looks around at the other students and then she points to me. I am thrilled that I am chosen. I know in the deepest part of me that this is going to be a very important placement and I am going to learn a lot. NICRO puts me on the path that I shall follow for the rest of my life. It reinforces and confirms my determined decision to start an organisation for battered women as soon as I qualify as a social worker.

Naomi, my supervisor at NICRO, gives me my first introduction to the whole issue of women abuse and domestic violence. My first day at NICRO is spent looking through books such as Robin Norwood's *Women Who Love Too Much*, Ginny McCarthy's *The Ones Who Got Away* and *Getting Free* and Lee Ann Hoff's *Battered Women as Survivors*. I spend many days reading these and other books on women and women abuse. It is a crash course in what is going on in dysfunctional relationships and violence against women all over the world.

Because of the secrecy and the shameful stigma of being abused, not many people know what a world-wide pandemic it actually is. I certainly do not. I am soon to learn that it is also a dreadful hidden disease in our own society. I am shocked at what men do to women. I am shocked at the extent of it. No one speaks about it and very few know about it. It is really scary. I want to be an advocate for women's rights.

Naomi also establishes a forum called Co-ordinated Action for Battered Women. Social workers and people working in different women's organisations attend the monthly meetings of the forum at NICRO. It gives me greater insight and understanding into what is happening in the field. I am in the right place at the right time. This is the first organised forum where we can discuss women's issues and the rights of women. It is the forerunner to the Western Cape Network against Violence against Women to which I later belong.

Naomi also organises Rape Crisis training for me and I meet another group of strong women who work in the field of rape and woman abuse in Cape Town. There is so much that needs to be done. The women's stories are frightening and heart-breaking. Rape Crisis

does really important work but it only deals with rape and not with cases of domestic violence. It also does not appear to be active in the disadvantaged communities of Cape Town where so many women need help.

These younger women from NICRO and Rape Crisis are opening my eyes to a new wave of thought and feeling. I am being exposed to an emerging group of young feminists who are quite radical in their own way. I am excited and I feel fortunate to be able to mix with them and get to know them. I begin to learn more about the strong feminist movement that is emerging and sweeping away centuries of gender bias, stereotypes and abuse. I am assimilating feminist ideas. Every day brings changes within me as I bump into or reach out for knowledge, understanding and insight about women abuse that I have never had before.

Even in 1992 it is ahead of its time in South Africa to be a feminist and to claim to be one. As I talk to most women whom I know in my conventional world they are quick to denounce feminists and condemn them for their politics. It is clear to me that traditional women appear to be frightened of what feminists are trying to do and how the changes will affect them. Yet, as the feminist Gloria Steinem explained, feminism is about making life fairer for women everywhere. It is not about creating a piece of the existing pie. It is about baking a new pie.

These feminists are shifting the power balance so that women can now ask men with confidence "What part of NO do you not understand?" They are brave activists and they embrace a determination to change the status quo for women. I feel as if I am sitting on a cusp of change in my own life. I somewhat audaciously sign myself Ms.

From the generally disrespected and dismissive title of Miss, to the socially respected title of Mrs, I have now graduated to the personally empowering title of Ms. I am shocking most of my family and friends in the process. I am secretly enjoying stirring the pot. I am growing into a new me. Actually, for the first time in my life, I am growing into the real me. I enjoy putting forward my seemingly radical ideas and opinions about the power and control men have

over women. Of course I know that I am purposefully provoking important discussions.

My husband Lawrence is not happy with my questions and my viewpoints but it is fascinating to see how the conversations move. It seems that men are firstly intrigued. They often return to the old cliché of how men and women are different and that we have to accept the differences. This is wood for my fire and it fuels my conversation. I am getting the measure of men and women in our community who either like me for my viewpoints or do not. I soon stop caring about their attitude towards me because I believe that this important topic needs to be aired, and perceptions need to be challenged and changed. Some women listen to me, put forward their own viewpoints and are intrigued. Generally speaking, younger women are more open to engaging with the subject. It is interesting to see who support me and who do not.

I talk about my vision of training unskilled black and coloured women to become community workers so that they can deliver free, culturally appropriate, services to women who need help in their own disadvantaged communities.

I think that my husband is beginning to wonder just whom he married. He cannot be sure of me anymore and I am sure that he sometimes wants to disown me. I can no longer be the goody-two-shoes who slipped into his life and supported him at every turn. Now that I want his support it is difficult for him to give it to me. I am changing patterns of behaviour established over twenty five years of marriage. He is no longer certain of who I am or of where we stand in our relationship.

Overseas Research

It is December 1992. I leave university with my Social Work degree and a burning desire to accomplish something worthwhile in this world. I promise myself that after fourteen years of tertiary education I shall not enrol for another diploma or degree or write another exam. Life is beckoning me to move forward after all the intense brain-screwing academia and demanding undergraduate practical work

I want to make good my desire to work with abused woman but before doing so, I decide to embark on a journey of discovery. How is it done in other countries? I make preparations to spend three months in England, Canada and the United States investigating the services available for women. I want to meet these icons and earliest advocates of feminism face-to-face. I leave Cape Town in May 1993 with a questionnaire and a vague idea of what I want to accomplish while I am away.

London is my first stop. I know London and I have mixed feelings about it. London excites me because there is so much that the city has to offer. I often accompany Lawrence there on business trips. While he fills his days with meetings I spend the time visiting fantastic art galleries and museums and browse for hours in bookstores.

Yet London often brings out a feeling of disconnectedness and loneliness. I find London an isolating and unfriendly city. I am staying in our London home for a month. It is quiet and empty. It is strange being in London on my own very far from family and friends. I have to keep reminding myself that I am here for a purpose. I cannot afford to forget this for one moment. I am not sure how the working Londoners are going to accept me.

I give myself two days to settle in. I call some friends and make arrangements for the weekend. I look forward to being with them and to finding out if they can help me in any way. In fact, I use delaying tactics. I have to work very hard to find the courage to make calls and my confidence increasingly seeps from me. I begin to realise

how difficult it is going to be to do this. I cannot give up now. I have to meet with organisations or forever live with a feeling of failure. I have to honour my commitment to myself and to my mission no matter how difficult it is to do this.

I sit at the desk in the lounge with the telephone in front of me. I write down the names of different organisations and their telephone numbers. I am unsure about what to say or what to ask. I force myself to bite the bullet. With my heart racing I dial the different women's centres and organisations that I have listed. I introduce myself and explain that I want to establish facilities for battered women in Cape Town and would like to find out what services they offer. Everyone agrees to meet with me. My anxiety is replaced with sheer relief.

I visit transition houses, shelters, women's national, local and community organisations including an immigrant women's facility. It is stimulating to talk to these helpful women who have been in the field for so long. I have great respect for what they are doing.

Domestic violence is only just starting to be exposed and condemned and the personal agenda is not yet at the forefront of the political agenda for women. It is only slowly being expounded through women's vocal protests and media exposures. Brave women whom I am meeting in organisations confirm that virtually no one else in their society is taking any serious notice of domestic violence. Violence against women is purposefully unexposed and cruelly disregarded.

As curious as I am to meet these wonderful directors and members of staff, so are they interested in my proposed plan to set up an organisation for abused women in Cape Town. They are particularly interested in my plan to train grassroots women and develop services for women from poor, disadvantaged communities. I tap into their wisdom and they are generous with information. I love the team work that I observe and the amazing support they give each other. I am constantly aware that I am in the presence of pioneering women and at the epicentre of women on the move. Their hard-won knowledge and expertise can help me understand what to expect.

One thing becomes apparent. When I ask what their greatest challenge is they tell me that funding is an onerous and endless burden. I am so stupidly and naively sure that I shall not have the same problem that I do not even ask them how they fundraise. I later discover that obtaining funding is the biggest nightmare of all.

Each evening I return home with my head full of my experiences of the day, tired but happy. I am thrilled to be doing something I have wanted to do for a long time. These visits are so important for my planning. There are kernels of ideas that are beginning to form in my mind and I realise that my plans cannot include a shelter or safe house for abused women. It would be too expensive, especially in terms of 24-hour staffing, running costs, infrastructure, and the strict security that is crucial because of the danger posed by angry abusive partners.

My next stop is Toronto where I stay with a friend. Once again I am welcomed and given valuable information and brochures. Canada is doing exceptionally good work with important women's projects. Their willingness to share this information with me is so encouraging. I can now return to far away Cape Town with up-to-the-minute research, knowledge and reports of ways in which we can help women in domestic violence situations.

I move onto Vancouver, where my sisters Ann and Irene have set up some meetings for me. I value their help. My two wonderful friends Nina and Eva arrange to drive me to my meetings on alternate days. We can enjoy each other's company and catch up on our own personal news as we traverse the city. In the evenings I share my daily activities and experiences with my family and friends who act as my support and my sounding boards. I missed this so much when I was on my own in London.

It is in Vancouver that Mosaic finds its name. In between my meetings I drop into a little health bar for a snack. I am deep in thought when a group of young people sits down next to me and starts a very interesting conversation about theatre, art and music. With my ears on stalks, I suddenly hear the word 'Mosaic' and it hits me like a sledgehammer. Of course. This is the symbol that I am seeking in a mosaic. Broken pieces of abused women's lives will be put together to create a beautiful and whole life for themselves. It

also symbolises women of different colours, shapes, sizes, backgrounds and experiences uniting to form a powerful support system for each other. It sounds so right.

Mosaic Training Service and Healing Centre for Women it will be. I want Mosaic's colour to be Purple to symbolise Spirit and Peace and I want our logo to be the women's sign. I can return to develop Mosaic's own pioneering 'herstory' at home with a clear focus.

I thank God for the help, support and guidance and for giving me this opportunity to create a Mosaic Centre for abused women in Cape Town. Together we shall create Mosaic and my strongest faith in God will grow during the development of Mosaic. It is a decisive turning point for me and I am thrilled and incredibly relieved that things are moving in the right direction.

From Canada I fly to the States. My friends help me to set up meetings in Los Angeles, Washington and New York. In places like Women In Need (WIN), National Organization for Women (NOW) and House of Ruth. I stand in their offices and on the home-ground of the great iconic feminists of all time. I can almost feel the presence of the feisty Bella Abzug, the tireless and brilliant Betty Friedan who founded NOW and the legendary Gloria Steinem who started Ms Magazine and who gave me the courage to call myself Ms. I am visiting Woman's Mecca.

The three amazing months begin to draw to a close. I have certainly benefitted and learnt a great deal from the twenty four wonderful women's service facilities and organisations in England, Canada and the States. I have formed a vastly better understanding of what needs to be started in Cape Town and yet I also realise that I now have to design appropriate services to meet our own so-called third world needs. The services of these organisations are not viable or culturally appropriate within our own local context. I hope that I can produce services that are exactly what we need to help our thousands of abused women who are caught up in the destructive cycle of violence. The only legitimate violence is self-defence. It is never acceptable to use violence to solve a problem.

On my return flight to Cape Town I am more focused and informed. I feel considerably more confident to take on this

monumental task in building up Mosaic to help abused women in the disadvantaged communities of Cape Town.



Marianne Liebenberg originally designed Mosaic's purple Logo in 1997



Mosaic's current purple Logo designed by Marianne in 2018

Return to Cape Town

I have been away from home for three life-changing months and in August 1993 I return to cold and rainy Cape Town. I am happy to be back. When I tell my friends, family and acquaintances about my Grand Plan and what I am going to do, they look at me sceptically. It sounds like an unachievable and very risky pipe dream. Some call me brave. A close friend calls me mightily weird. Some refer me to people who they think might be able to assist me others quickly distance themselves from me. Everyone thinks my vision is too pioneering, too vast, too impractical and too difficult to achieve. Maybe it is and maybe I am out of touch with reality but there is something inside me that will not let go of me. I am on my own while my family stands cautiously by.

When Mosaic is eventually established as a reputable organisation one of my colleagues is invited to be our guest speaker at our Annual General Meeting. She mentioned that when I first outlined what I wanted to do she became so nervous that she got as far away from me as possible.

We are living in politically interesting times in South Africa. The Armageddon that so many people predicted would take place during the transition period has thankfully not happened. There is a very cautious feeling of optimism for the outcome of the first free and fair democratic elections taking place on the 26th of April next year. We know that the ANC will gain an outright majority in the elections and that Nelson Mandela will most certainly be our future President. He is showing himself to be amazingly compassionate and forgiving. His stance of forgiveness is reassuring for all, and especially for us, the white population.

No one feels safe and secure and there is the real fear of the unknown. There is added turmoil in the wake of the assassination in April of Chris Hani who was the chief of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed unit of the ANC. Despite this, Chris Hani supported negotiations-for-freedom over violence-for-freedom and he wanted

freedom for all of us in South Africa. The moment I read of his assassination my blood runs cold. It is the greatest tragedy and sends shock waves throughout the country, and the world. There are serious tensions and fears that the transition period will now be destabilised and will erupt in violence. Nelson Mandela addresses our people and calls for calm. He speaks from his heart and asks us to stand together and not jeopardise what Chris Hani gave his life for – the freedom of all of us in this country. We are truly blessed to have Nelson Mandela guide us during this turbulent time.

I am deeply aware of how incredibly perfect the timing is for an enterprise such as Mosaic. I begin to sense a feeling of freedom that I have never felt before. For blacks and whites this is the opportunity of a lifetime. I sense that there are feelings of opportunity and well-being slowly emerging in the midst of this tense period of transformation.

I am excited to return home and to begin to repay my dues to my country and to women in our previously disenfranchised communities. This will be compensation in a small way for all the privileges that I have benefited from in the past as a white woman. I am determined to work hard to earn the right to live in this beautiful country. I also need it for my own emotional and psychological well-being and for my peace of mind. I need to give back in order to live peacefully with myself.

It is reassuring to know that I can now work in the Black townships without the police following me, arresting me or restricting my movements. I am now free to meet and work with whomever I wish in whichever ways I wish. As a white South African, this is incredible. Black women and I now have the right to meet socially and we can safely cross the racial boundaries that were strictly in place during all the years of apartheid. Everything is perfectly synchronistic. It is absolute Divine Timing.

In the first months after my return I start to register Mosaic. My lawyer husband acts as my attorney. In November 1993 Mosaic is registered as a NGO, a Non-Profit Organisation (600-114 NPO), and a Section 21 Company. I have to find seven people to act as the original signatories for registering Mosaic and so I find seven family members and friends. It is the first serious step to establish Mosaic.

I find an accountant and set up banking facilities. I need to find funding so I approach the Union of Jewish Women which kindly agrees to allow me to use its fundraising number until Mosaic can apply for its own. It does not promise me funding but it supports the idea of a woman's service organisation. Every requirement, no matter how small, is a huge responsibility and worry for me. I am often completely out of my depth and have to be guided by people, to trust them and trust the process.

I realise that I have to begin by contacting people who work in the service professions to find out if they believe that Mosaic is necessary in Cape Town by administering the questionnaire that I used overseas. There are very few women's organisations that I can schedule meetings with in Cape Town compared to the abundance and variety of dynamic places for women available overseas. There is virtually nothing happening on the local scene for women, especially for black and coloured women in their own communities. It is not easy to find suitable organisations to visit. These are the very early days.

I reconnect with Rape Crisis and NICRO's Forum for Coordinated Action for Battered Women. I contact service providers through the Red Cross Society where I worked as a social work student and through Life Line where I volunteered for five years as a telephone counsellor. From these women I learn about more places to visit and my networking increases. Some meetings are more successful than others but I always walk out feeling somewhat encouraged and hopeful. When I venture further afield from the circle of NGOs and colleagues whom I know and with whose organisations I am familiar I sometimes experience a different and less encouraging attitude. I find some women guarded and suspicious when I ask for their opinions about a service that can help women in their communities.

I meet with black political women who for many years hold positions of authority in their own disadvantaged communities and who definitely make me feel that I am white first, and woman second. They sense that Mosaic and I shall be threats to their positions of power. They feel a sense of ownership and they want no intrusion or competition.

One of these women who runs an organisation in the township refuses to meet with me. She is active in the ANC Women's League and a number of her influential women friends are positioned in the newly formed government. She jealously and obsessively claims sole rights to deliver services in her community and tries everything possible to stop other NGOs from working in the area. Ironically, sometime later when Mosaic is beginning to establish itself she successfully headhunts a relatively untrained member of my staff and tries to hijack Mosaic's information

I attend meetings with women who are long-time activists and political figures involved in the struggle for freedom. I believe that it is necessary to hear women politicians' opinions about Mosaic. I am very aware that they have fought the long, hard battle for democracy under extremely dangerous circumstances in order to achieve social equality. I admire them and I am grateful to them. But I am troubled by my strong feelings about their levels of dishonest communication with me and I cannot read their minds.

During one particular visit to a political organisation I meet with women, mostly coloured women, well-known veterans in the field of local politics. They are longstanding members of the ANC. They seem to be curious about what I have to share. They tell me when they are available and give me directions to their venue.

On arrival I knock cautiously on the door before I am called to enter the room. I find them sitting in a small circle obviously expecting me. I have interrupted their conversation and the sudden silence is uneasy. They look me up and down and weigh me up. They ask me to come in but they are not friendly and I do not feel comfortable. In fact I immediately feel defensive.

I tell them that I am doing a Needs Assessment for a new organisation called Mosaic. They ask a lot of questions about Mosaic and my motives. They are direct and to the point. They want to know who else I have approached and who I have spoken to and what their responses have been. At times while I am speaking they interrupt me with authority and rudely cut me short. I sense their distrust and dislike of me. It takes courage to be the recipient of their passive aggression built up from years of anger against whites. We do not know or trust each other but this is still an important meeting for me.

I eventually ask them for their opinions. They agree that there is a need for the services that I want to offer to abused women in disadvantaged communities. But they are quick to tell me not to keep on saying “I”, “I did this” or “I want to do that” because they find it too personal. I do not know how to say it differently because at this time there is no-one else involved. It is difficult to talk about the “we” when, at this point there is only the “I”.

They suspect that I could easily start Mosaic for my own biased agenda, my own status seeking. I may not keep promises and betray them once more. I may pull out when the going gets tough, or when I have had enough, as has happened so many times in the past. These politicians and activists do not give me much of their time and I leave the meeting with a nasty taste in my mouth. I never work with them and frankly I never want to. In their own ways they are abusive in their power play.

We all still bear the deep and painful scars from a past from which we are not in any remote way distanced. We are divided and we neither know nor trust each other. Because I want Mosaic to improve the lives of women from all races and communities I honestly do not expect to find such hostile and unwelcoming reactions.

Apartheid has painted us all with its poisonous brush and has killed the trust and the spirit in all of us. It has eaten away at our deepest selves and done its brutal damage in every way to every single one of us. It is going to take many long and painful years to bridge the gap and bring us closer together.

These meetings make me more determined than ever to work as quickly as possible to turn Mosaic into a fully representative “we”. This is exactly what Mosaic wants and needs to achieve – to bring women of all races, religions and communities together to work for the good of all women.

I am beginning to see that it is going to be a big challenge and an enormous learning curve. But I trust with all my being that it can be done. We are living in changing and challenging times but we have the first real opportunity to work together for the betterment of all. We have to look to the future and try and build sound bridges so that healing can take place and there can be peace in our land. As women we have to draw from our combined woman-power and close the

divide between us. Combined Woman Power. It is crucial and integral to peace in our country.

It is the dream of Mosaic.

Kim, Mandy and Phindi

During my social work training at UCT and as a telephone counsellor for Life Line I become friendly with Kim. We connect so strongly and we talk for hours about our philosophy and interests that we have in common. When I think of someone to help me with Mosaic I know that she will be an amazing person to join me. She graduates as a social worker at UCT a year before me and is working in London for a year.

Whilst I stay in London visiting the different women's organisations, I meet with Kim and suggest that she joins me in starting up Mosaic but she wants to travel and is not ready to come back home. She advises me to call her best friend Mandy who is in Cape Town. I remember Mandy from university and I am happy to do so.

On my return I contact Mandy and she is delighted to join me. We get on well from the moment that we start working together. We set up office in the basement of my house and begin to plan a way forward. Mandy's social work experience from her year working in London is such an advantage. It is a blessing not to have to work on my own and working together Mandy and I generate positive energy.

However there are often times during this beginning stage when I sit in front of the computer and hold my head in my hands. I have moments of real doubt. I feel the burden of the 'not knowing', the insecurity and the responsibility. There is always the uncertainty of wondering what we shall do today and if any progress will be made. The end goal is clear but how to get there is another story.

Most importantly, I have no practical experience of how to go about structuring an NGO. It is a weird and difficult time for me. It is a frightening, often dark and confusing time. I know that our activities are not grounded within the harsh reality of the real world. We do not know what it takes to establish something as difficult as a real organisation, with real clients, real funding needs, real established

services, real staff, real predicaments and challenges. We do not have a clear goal as to what shape or form Mosaic will actually take.

Yet everything that we do is done with such earnestness and enthusiasm. We visit our accountant and our banker and have meetings with our lawyer. We set up meetings with banks and companies and ask for large sums of money. We are focused on presenting ourselves as busy professionals. But in reality it is quite funny.

Back in the office my new computer is a total mystery to me. When Mandy joins me I watch her as she knows how to open files, name them and save information onto floppy disks. She knows how to copy, cut, paste, save and print. I have someone to teach me about the computer and the programmes. Thank goodness for her year in London and her experience with computers.

Several months later Kim comes back to Cape Town and she joins us part-time. Kim and Mandy naturally team up again and we spend a happy time working together. Kim brings even more skills to Mosaic and has a confidence and an energy about her that commands attention and respect. I am grateful for the little team that we have formed. I may be the Director in name but in fact they are teaching me and I am learning valuable skills from them. My sense of purpose is renewed. We all connect strongly with the combined creative energy and there are many ideas that we generate through our easy interaction.

Every Monday morning the three of us start the week by sitting around my dining room table debating and planning our weekly activities. We draw a huge mind map on flipchart paper and then write down all the things that need to be done during the week. We decide to market Mosaic and set up meetings with people in the community. We also write newsletters to friends of Mosaic and we are so proud of it although it does not have much content. Who do we send it to? Things begin to change in the office. We never send it out.

I know that Kim and Mandy are lifelong friends but I increasingly come to understand the real dynamics of their relationship. Kim is the unquestionable leader and has always been the leader and Mandy is Kim's faithful follower. However, they are a formidable force

working together. I feature less in their joint plans. They decide what will happen and what they will be doing each day. They make decisions without informing or consulting me, and most of the time they exclude me from their activities and arrangements.

I come to realise that I am being side-lined. When I am working on the computer they ask to use it and sit down, close in and cut me off. I am forced to step back into the office and watch their backs as they work to complete what they are doing. Their actions are hurtful and disrespectful but I do not make a comment. I need what they bring to Mosaic and to me.

There are days when they leave to go off to meetings that they have pre-arranged. When I ask if I can go with them they say that I need to stay in the office and it is not necessary for me to go along with them. I am supposed to be the director but I am in fact largely disempowered in our decision making because I am the odd one out and I am still inexperienced and unsure of myself.

They offer me the opportunity to visit Mrs Tutu at Bishops court. We want to tell her about Mosaic and ask her to be our patron. They say that I should go alone and share what we are doing. They have visited Bishops court many times and they know Mrs Tutu. They arrange the meeting for me. I immediately feel at ease in Mrs Tutu's company and she is warmly welcoming of me. I share that we would love Mrs Tutu to be our patron but she graciously refuses because of her many commitments and her availability to be with Bishop Tutu on his travels. The visit is memorable and I am grateful to Kim and Mandy for this experience.

It has reached the stage during our Monday meetings that when I try to reassert my vision and my needs, there is a power struggle. We now have such different ideas about how we shall do things. I am adamant that we need a Black woman on our team and that we need to move our services into the community. I want to employ Phindi who I met when I accompanied Helen into the townships in the 1980s and who was a member of a sewing group in Gugulethu. Helen told her that I am starting an organisation working with abused women and she wants to join me. I want to train Phindi in community work skills as it is really important to have a Black woman

as our cultural guide and source of knowledge about women in her community.

Kim and Mandy do not want Phindi to join us. They think that we should look for someone who is already trained in social work and we should not employ someone without qualifications. I do not want another social worker and who will pay an extra social worker's salary when I am already using my own savings? I insist that Phindi joins us on a half-day basis. She becomes my responsibility. I coach her on how to present herself to community leaders and role-players and how to market Mosaic. Kim and Mandy leave us upstairs to play, as they see it, whilst they are busy working downstairs in the office.

More cracks begin to show. Differences of attitude and opinion between Kim and me are beginning to increase as Mandy removes herself and remains quiet. Tensions between us are seriously disturbing the balance of the group. Kim and I are not on the same page anymore. She is a strong personality, intelligent and competent and wants control.

One day Phindi asks me "Rol, why does Kim always make big things out of little things and why does Mandy always dance to Kim's tune?"

I appreciate Phindi's questions because I am beginning to think that perhaps I am exaggerating the situation and that I should not feel so sensitive or take all of this so personally. Phindi gives me the support that I need and the validation that I am not the only person in the office who sees what is going on.

Journal October 1993

"At some deep level I have known that a whole layer of stuff has been lying under the surface and I haven't wanted to get into it. Today, whether I have wanted to or not, I am there. I know that it is healthy for me to look at this as painfully uncomfortable as it is. It is strange how my personal problems and Mosaic's problems are running concurrently. I sense that there are big changes afoot for me with scary steps into the unknown. I am struggling today and feel like I have come unstuck.

Phindi is not coming in today, Mandy is ill and Kim is out of the office. There is a very heavy energy in this room and I feel that there is so much to do on my own again. I am unable to get going. I have absolutely no strength and I feel

a great sadness. No energy and no answers. I need healing. I feel supportless and tired of being the one who bears responsibility for the enormity of what's happening in my life and for Mosaic.

Today I am feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work that we have to do and all the contacts that we have made and not followed up on. I am feeling guilty. Irresponsible. Stupid. Weak. Giving in all the time. I am frustrated with myself for not standing up to Kim. I am often let down by them and then I feel in truth and in the depths of me that I am inadequate, isolated and on my own”.

Eventually everything that is happening in the office combines and comes to a head. Kim arrives for work whilst I am speaking on the telephone. When I finish the conversation I go downstairs and find her sitting on the low white wall outside the office smoking a cigarette. Mandy sits next to her as they chat quietly in the early morning sun. They sit on the low wall with the waves splashing onto the rocks behind them. The air is cool and fresh and full of the invigorating cold saltiness of the ocean. The sun emerges over Lion's Head and it is a calm and beautiful morning. Nothing prepares me for the events of the day.

I casually ask what they are going to be busy with and Kim tells me that she is not going to carry on working with Mosaic any longer. Mandy sits quietly next to her. At first I do not quite understand what she is saying but when the impact of her words suddenly hit me I am stunned. For what seems like a very long time I stand silently in front of them rooted to the spot. I try to digest her news but I do not dare to think about the implications just yet. We know that there have been difficulties but I have been hoping against hope that we can work this all out.

Kim has clearly decided that she is leaving Mosaic but Mandy who needs the job financially is undecided. However, by lunch time both Kim and Mandy have made the decision to leave. I feel bereft. I sensed that this could happen but not like this. I am completely drained of energy. I am in shock. I fall into utmost insecurity and fear.

Whilst they pack up and organise themselves to leave Mosaic I call our accountant for some information that I need. I sit on the carpet in the office, trying to draw strength from the ground as I dial

his number. I am overwhelmed with emotion and shock. I quickly replace the receiver because I dissolve in silent tears. Kim comes confidently by and pats me on my head as she would pat a small child who is upset. She is very patronising as she says “Do not worry, you can do it”. She seems completely unaffected by their decision to leave or how I am feeling.

I am choked with mixed feelings and thoughts. At this moment I do not believe that I have the skills, the strength or the desire to continue on my own. I feel so betrayed, abandoned and alone. The worst part of it is that we have been student friends for several years and despite our real differences and the conflict that it has caused, they are two wonderful women. Now I lose the friendship of Kim and Mandy. It is just me and Phindi left in the office and we have to start all over again.

Once Kim and Mandy leave Mosaic Phindi and I work together. She comes in during the mornings and I start training her about how to educate people about stopping violence against women. I also try to reorganise myself emotionally and psychologically and regain direction. I feel responsible as I am now the only social worker and I have virtually no experience. Phindi is quick to learn but she has no training at all apart from the little that I have taught her.

At the beginning of April 1994 just as Phindi is leaving my house after work, the telephone rings and I answer it. A Xhosa woman asks for Vuyelwa. I reply that I do not know Vuyelwa and I ask if it is Phindi to whom she wants to speak. She puts the phone down. Shortly after that another call comes in and I recognise the same voice but this time she asks for Phindi. Phindi speaks in Xhosa and I can see that she is becoming agitated during the call. When she puts the receiver down I ask her who the woman was and what she wants.

She tells me that it is Nondumiso who is the director of a community organisation in the township. She is the woman who refused to have any contact with me when I tried to meet her during the early investigative months. I am curious to know why she is calling because at a community workshop before Kim joined us, Mandy and I tried to speak to Nondumiso who was rude to us and gave us the cold shoulder. After the community workshop we tried

to contact her but she continually refused to meet to discuss how we can work together.

Phindi tells me that Nondumiso insists that she speaks Xhosa because she did not want me to know who she is or why she wants to speak to Phindi. She tells Phindi she must come to her immediately and she has to come on her own. Phindi has to bring with all the documentation from Mosaic that she can find. Phindi tells Nondumiso that she cannot bring anything because if she does, the white woman will find out what the conversation is about. Phindi has to meet with Nondumiso as it is possibly our only opportunity to do so. They also work with women and I want us to work together and not against each other. I quickly drive Phindi to town and drop her off at the taxi rank.

Phindi and I are friends. Nondumiso cannot believe that a black woman can be friends with a white woman and she assumes that Phindi shall identify with her, work against me and be disloyal to Mosaic. When Phindi comes back to work the next day she tells me that Nondumiso questions her about what we are doing at Mosaic and refuses to give Phindi any information about her own organisation. Phindi, in turn, is guarded in her information giving.

The interesting information that Phindi returns with is that Nondumiso, who has received a large amount of money from overseas specifically to fund her poor NGO, now lives in a new and expensive brick house, drives an expensive car and has placed her daughter in a private school. I am not in the least surprised when Phindi gives me this news.

Phindi and I settle down to work again. I mostly want to get her to the stage where she can begin working in the community because I want Mosaic to move out of the office and begin hands-on practical community work. I continue to train her in social work skills as best I can. We are happy to be working together.

Helen asks me if I would like to run a workshop for the members of Ithemba Labantwana, her group of teachers and principals of pre-schools. I am happy to do this and it is also a valuable experience for Phindi who will help me and learn from the event. My daughter Martine has also volunteered to join us.

Journal 2 June 1994

"Yesterday was an exciting day for Mosaic as Helen organised for us to hold our first workshop at Ulwazi in Langa for Ithemba Labantwana. There were about seventy women present and it went very well. They were interested, participated with enthusiasm, contributed amazing insights and shared experiences with the group. Martine helped Phindi and me. I know that at times it is difficult for Teen to work with me as her mother, but I see how she respects me for the work that I am doing and I was proud to have her help us yesterday.

The workshop lasted just over two and a half hours with a break for tea. We covered a lot of material. And right throughout there was full participation from all the women. Afterwards a few women came to speak to us. We were really happy when we finished because we received such positive feedback. We run our next workshop with this same group next Wednesday and we shall cover myths, why men abuse women, why women stay, women's strengths and how we can help ourselves.

It was so uncomplicated yesterday and it felt so right. I keep on thinking about the excellent training I received from UCT, about how easily I managed the workshop and how much energy it generated. I was totally in control and allowed a lot of participation to go on in the group. I loved every minute of it. So did Phindi and Teen.

When we were finished I questioned myself as to why it took me so long to start these workshops and why we did all that office work first. I guess it was that we were preparing the way and felt that we needed first to put Mosaic on the map. Anyway, the bottom line is that we have something practical to show for our efforts and there are tons more where it came from. I really know what we are doing. It is so exciting being in the community."

Today is another busy and exciting day in the office for Phindi and me. We get more calls today from Ikamva Labantu. They ask us to do a presentation at a meeting of disabled women and mothers of disabled children in the Gugulethu Township. We shall give a short presentation on the issues of violence against women and then tell them about our workshops and try to encourage them to attend.

The second call we receive is to invite us to attend a steering committee meeting of the Women's Alliance on how to carry forward with the future of women's organisations in Cape Town. They have been very wary and non-inclusive of us before now. It is

quite something for the Women's Alliance, a well-established forum for many women's organisations to call us.

Phindi and I share a number of exciting and busy weeks in the office and out in the field. We workshop and attend different forums in the townships of Khayelitsha, Langa, Gugulethu, and Nyanga. I want to select our first volunteers for Mosaic. We now have the names of some wonderful women who have volunteered to work with us although I am not quite sure how I shall train them.

One Sunday afternoon we hold a workshop in Khayelitsha for a small group of thirteen women. It is the only time that they can meet because they work during the week. The workshop arises from our previous meeting with the women from the Khayelitsha Forum held earlier during the week. We follow our workshop plan but because it is a small group we use the information and turn it into a discussion group. When they speak in Xhosa Phindi translates for me but mostly we speak in English. It is so successful and Phindi and I feel good. At each meeting there are women who want us to run workshops for other groups.

As with all things, there are some worries and anxieties too. Sometimes I worry about my safety in the townships although I would never tell my family or friends. I am very careful and only go in with Phindi but the risk is always there. This week as we are driving out of Gugulethu, I slow down as some young men kick a ball in the street in front of us. One of the older boys runs towards my car and grabs hold of my slightly open window and clings on to it as I continue to drive slowly forward. He looks inside the car to see if he can find anything of value. Fortunately before we drive off after the workshop Phindi and I locked our bags in the boot of my car. When he does not see anything he lets go of the window and I drive on. I feel somewhat shaken and grateful that there was not anything in the car. I am careful but I also have to accept that I am vulnerable when I go into these areas. And I am certainly not going to stop this work in the community. I find it too rewarding and fulfilling.

After one workshop Phindi tells me that she needs to speak to me because she is struggling financially and has to work full-time in order to earn more money. I can still only afford to employ her part-time and unfortunately I cannot afford to give her what she wants to

earn. Despite Kim, Mandy and my efforts there is no additional funding in Mosaic. And my own funds are being rapidly depleted.

It is a Friday morning six weeks after her meeting with Nondumiso, and Phindi is supposed to come into work after a few days' leave. She calls me and I ask her where she is and what time she is coming into the office. She tells me that she is not coming into the office because she has applied for a full-time job with another NGO that works with women in the community. My mind starts ticking fast. She says she has been for an interview and she is accepting the position. She is sorry but she needs the money. She thanks me for what I have done for her whilst she was with Mosaic. Phindi's news is completely unexpected. Once again I am in shock. I ask her to please tell me the name of the NGO where she is going to be employed but she says that she does not know. I do not believe her. When she did not arrive back at work this morning in some part of me I must have known that this would happen. When we finish the conversation, I say goodbye to her and wish her well in her new position. I put the phone down and I sit at the dining room table staring ahead of me without focus. We have worked so well together in the community and she began to learn so much.

Now I am really on my own. I have no answers. I have to digest this but there is just whirling confusion in my head and my thoughts are all over the place. I suddenly feel totally disorientated and suspended in time and space. Kim and Mandy give me no warning of their resignation and now I have no consideration from Phindi. It is a repetition of the way in which Kim and Mandy leave me on the same day that they resign. Just like that.

Journal August 1994

'Today I fight depression or something related to depression. I find it hard to move and stop myself from feeling sorry for myself. I am indulging in self-pity. I need the pure luxury of feeling sorry for myself. Today I am sad and hurt. And if I am honest, deep down I am really angry. I must just get on with things and find other ways of working and find other people to work with. And of course I know that I shall do this, probably with the Ikamva Labantu women.

The bottom line is that I have to start all over again on my own. I have to do a workshop in Khayelitsba on my own tomorrow. The social worker at Shawco

will provide me with an interpreter but it just won't be the same without Phindi. I don't know if I have the strength going in by myself. It is very hard for me to get going today."

The more I think about things the more I begin to see Mosaic in a different light. It is as if Mosaic is a façade of an organisation that cannot even get to first base. I have to accept that it is not an organisation at all. Mosaic is a sham. I honestly feel like I am a fraud and Mosaic is a pathetic façade with no substance to it. I have just hit on such truths that I feel utterly weak.

I am doing some impressive esteem bashing and I am coming close to rock bottom. I eventually ask God what on Earth I am doing and why in Heaven's name I am doing it. I ask God what is happening to me and why everyone is deserting me. It seems to me that everything I have ever wanted to achieve for Mosaic is collapsing before my eyes. I seriously question the rationale of what I am doing. The flood gates open. I sob. I wail and howl. I am alone in the house so I allow myself to disintegrate out of control and fall into the deepest pit of despair. I am bereft. My heart is breaking. I feel like such a phony and a fool. I do not know why I even started this mad impossible venture and I feel that I am completely unequipped to carry on. Flashes of all that has happened in the office and the betrayals that I have experienced continue to bring fresh tears. I have no more energy. No more passion for the undertaking. The future opens into a vast empty nothingness. I have no idea of how I am ever going to carry on. I have lost the way. I rock back and forth in absolute grief.

I go into my bathroom and sit on the closed toilet seat doubled over, wiping my streaming eyes and nose with wads of toilet paper. When I have cried myself weak and dry and there seem to be no more tears to shed I look up at myself. I see a red eyed, grey-faced ghost staring back at me. All the life and light in my body has completely drained away.

I begin to speak in the quietest voice to all the abused women out there.

"Forgive me" I say. "Please forgive me but I cannot carry on. It is just too difficult. I have to apologise to all of you, abused and in

pain. I cannot do this anymore. I have to abandon my vision and my desire to help you. I will apply for a position as a social worker in another NGO and do what I can to help the community. But that is all I can do. It is the end of the dream. It is the end of Mosaic. I have to stop. It is too tough. I have to accept defeat. I am so, so sorry”.

I get up and stand weakly in front of the mirror leaning for support on the basin top. I am trying to come to terms with my final decision. I just stare at myself to allow the thoughts to sink in. It is heart-breaking. I am giving up. It is the end. I walk out of the bathroom into my bedroom in a daze. Despite the breakdown, in some part of me I also feel a peculiar resolve. I no longer have to carry the heavy load.

The phone rings next to my bed. I really do not want to speak to anyone but I pick up the receiver and answer in a low, slow voice. It is one of the nursing sisters from Mitchells Plain. I educated her nursing staff about domestic violence the previous month. She tells me that the nurses found the session to be so valuable that she wants me to please return to speak to all the district staff at another meeting on a date that we can agree on.

I am dazed and confused. Surely I am giving up? I have made my decision. I find myself debating inwardly as to whether I shall accept the invitation or not. I hesitate. Reluctantly I accept and set a date. But I tell myself that this will definitely be the last thing that I shall do for Mosaic. I replace the receiver and head for the bedroom door. Before I reach the door the phone rings again. I walk slowly back and pick up the receiver. It is the Human Resource Manager from a corporate company asking me if I shall please return to speak to some of their other members of staff about abuse. I am wordless. Time stands still. I feel as if I am being sucked into a vortex. After what seems like an eternity I recover to reservedly agree to address her employees the following week.

However, I make a full and final promise to myself that this is definitely the last request that I will meet. What is going on? Something otherworldly is happening. These so-called coincidences are uncanny and disturbing.

I sit on my bed again and look up at God. In a fed-up, disgruntled and angry voice I ask God “What are you doing to me? Why are you

testing me like this? I have just made a difficult decision and accepted that I am stopping Mosaic. I am giving up. Now these two calls in quick succession? What is going on here with these infuriating coincidences? Leave me alone God. I do not want to play your game anymore. Just leave me alone”.

Thankfully I am alone because something snaps inside me. I begin to shout out loudly at God. I rant with every fibre of my being. The more I fuel my anger the more my rage increases. I scream at God.

“Go find someone else to do your work God. I have had enough. I want to be left alone and in peace. I have made up my mind. Now you are pulling me back to play your game and your game is too hard and too scary. I won’t play with you God. Setting me up and stripping me down is not playing fair. It is much easier to give up now that I have come to accept my decision and I have not accomplished too much anyway. I have apologised to all the women and I am out. Go and find another stupid idiot to do your bidding. It is a crazy idea in the first place. I am out. Leave me alone. Do you hear me? Leave me alone!”

The tears start again, red-hot angry tears. I cry furiously into my hands as I rock myself on the edge of the bed. I am having a massive tantrum and a cauldron is boiling inside me. I am beyond furious. The most infuriating part is that I know that there is no such thing as coincidence. Everything happens for a reason. These two calls are obviously meant to be and are coming as direct messages for me. I am seriously not happy. And that is an understatement. I am petrified that I have to carry on working on my own, especially as I have no direction. I have a choice, but do I really have a choice? I wriggle like an angry snake. I am spitting furious with God and the Universe. It takes some time until I calm down totally exhausted. I have to stop panicking and take things step by step. I have to start with the two arrangements that were reluctantly agreed upon. After that I can make other decisions. I have the power to call it quits if I want to – despite God. There is such a thing as free choice and God knows that, hey God?

I keep my commitments. I speak to the nursing staff and the corporate staff. In fact, I am pleased that I agreed to do these

presentations as they both go extremely well. They force me out of the house and back into the community. I know deep down that this is where I need to be and what I need to do. But I still have no plans to continue with Mosaic.

A few weeks after Phindi leaves Mosaic I receive a call from her. As I suspect, she is working for Nondumiso. Whilst we are speaking to each other I put my hurt aside and I say that it is an ideal opportunity for her to act as a bridge between Mosaic and Nondumiso's organisation and see if we can work together.

"No Ro, I cannot do that. Nondumiso will never work with you because you are a white woman".

The story with Phindi does not end there. A few years later during a visit to the Department of Social Services I walk past an office and see Phindi busy behind a desk. She looks up as I walk past. We are surprised to see each other. She tells me that she left Nondumiso's NGO and we catch up on our respective news. There is such a change in Phindi. She is not the same person I met as a young member of a sewing group in Gugulethu when she told me that she wanted to work with abused women. Phindi acknowledges that Mosaic gave her the opportunity to advance herself from a community woman with no skills and training to becoming an employee of the Department of Social Services. Phindi tells me that she changed her life around because someone believed in her and gave her a chance.

Letting Go

Without focus, without support and companionship, I become increasingly stressed. I am not functioning well and I am coming apart at the seams. I am desperate for direction and I need other people's points of view about what is happening to me. I make two appointments. One is with a psychologist who has been highly recommended to me by my friend. The other appointment is with a psychic medium who I have visited before and who has helped me enormously at difficult times in my life. I tell the psychologist that I am not coping emotionally and I briefly recount my experiences with Kim, Mandy and Phindi. During the sessions with her I try to work out what is going on with me, and why I am experiencing all these blocks and traumas. Everything in my life seems to be in flux and I feel totally out of control.

The sessions with the psychologist are difficult but I feel lighter and more relieved. Nothing has changed but I begin to think differently. I realise that I am not in a healthy state of being and I am justifiably distressed. More than anything, I realise that I have to start making changes in my life and I must find direction. I need to reclaim my joy and my passion.

My session with Kathleen the psychic is a gift. She is able to accurately pinpoint my position at this moment and she gives me strong messages that I can relate to. Her vision of Mosaic in the future is positive and I now know that there is no way that I can give it up. I must move carefully and slowly and it will happen. I feel like an enormous load of heaviness has been lifted off my shoulders and that I have at last come out from under a dark mountain.

Journal August 1994

"The first thing Kathleen picked up on was the tremendous pain that I have been in. I know it sounds dramatic but she said that it was as if my whole aura is quivering with pain and that it is like I have been sawn apart inside. It is true that I am weakened and broken. My health is in a very poor state.

She said that I need a slow healing process of recovery. I must be with nature and be in water and I must paint and sing again and do anything that gives me pleasure. I have to heal myself with vitamins, minerals and body work and I must meditate because I am going into burnout. Only when I regain my centeredness and inner strength will things start to fall into place. The strong message is that I have to heal myself. My health is number one on my list. I have to protect myself before my real work begins because it will carry a lot of responsibility and I cannot do this work before I am healed. I have to grow strong within myself although she said that I do not understand how strong I really am and what a powerful learning process I have already been through.

She said that I have stayed in my marriage for what she called a most powerful initiation. Now I have to decide if I am going to stay or separate from the marriage and be on my own.

She said that when a person has a mission on this earth then the universe cannot give little bits of learning here and there. The universe has to send huge life lessons that have to be learnt in order to clear the way for a new life. She said that I have been prepared for this mission and the end of this period is almost here.

She sees that next June will be the start of the process of things coming together for me and Mosaic. There is so much moral and loving support for me in the spirit world and they will draw together people to work with me who function primarily out of love. Love will be the criterion for the selection of these people. The people who worked with me this year were not the right people and that is why they fell away.

I have to go slowly with Mosaic and just go gently, talking to people about Mosaic in a very relaxed way. She said that I shall not abandon Mosaic but I have to start slowly and remain small. She told me that it will take three years before I can clearly see where Mosaic is going. She also told me that Mosaic will grow to become a leader in its field and that there will be lots of responsibility for me so I have to get things right with myself before things can become right with Mosaic.

She said that I have to take time out. I must go away and enjoy myself and know that it is very good for me to do this. It will take three months for me to settle when I get back, and then I shall start to notice a difference in my life. It is as if I have fallen into a deep depression in a deep hole and now she sees me trying to crawl out. My true work is still to come”.

I cannot explain the peace that I experience after the session. I am infinitely more relaxed. 'Start slow and remain small' sounds manageable to me. I breathe a sigh of relief that things will work out in a much quieter, simpler way.

After my meeting with Kathleen I continue to run workshops in the townships and I also start to counsel some abused women but it is very low key. I feel that I am making a small contribution and I am making a difference in some people's lives. I consciously slow down and begin to regenerate on my own, mentally and spiritually. It is a time of rest, relief and renewal.

Helen asks me to run some training workshops on woman abuse for her staff members from Ikamva Labantu. I agree. It is easy for me and I know her mamas well so I am happy to do this. These are early days in the development of the form and content of the workshops so they are quite simple and I can manage on my own.

We decide to meet twice a month to start off with. I am giving them information but the training is informal. They receive the training in return for their services to the women in their community.



Helen, her husband Mike and me in Guguletu in the container that we bought for Ivy's sewing group

One thing that I am having difficulty getting used to with these women is Township Time. Township Time means that for sure, time is of no importance, and if I schedule a meeting for 10am then 11am or later is still okay. It is difficult to train women if some arrive early and some arrive late. But the latecomers are not fazed that they miss out on information. I have to recap at an alarming rate each time a new person presents herself.

I ask the women if they feel that it is acceptable to arrive late for our meetings. I am totally amazed when they agree that if a woman arrives late she must have a good reason and if she arrives late on more than three occasions then she is no longer part of the group. They decide to draw up a contract. I am impressed.

However, for as long as I work in the community we continue to function on Township Time and this requires a lot of patience and acceptance from me. It stretches and challenges me. If I fetch them for meetings there is frequently a delay. I have to put all of this into perspective and say to myself that their lives are so different and difficult and a training workshop is a luxury for them. There is so much else that they have to do. I am a punctual person and now I have to accommodate to a different set of rules. It is not easy.

Today, Saturday, there are more absentees. Nomsa has to lay her father's tombstone today and Catherine who is high up in her Church has to go to the funeral of one of her congregation members. I hope that this is not going to be something that I have to contend with often.

I am also experiencing so clearly for the first time in my life how dreadfully divisive the Apartheid system was for me as a white woman. I see how the legacy of Apartheid not only affected these black mamas but how it has affected me. There is so much that I do not know about this community. I have been deprived during my lifetime of the greatest opportunity to know my black sisters and to understand the everyday issues that they have to deal with. I see it more from the inside now. I have begun to enter their world.

I also have to deal with the racial misconceptions and prejudices that come out of the white community and that I have been surrounded with during all my years of Apartheid separation. Appearances in the white community often determine how people

relate to each other. In the black community that I am now moving in, this does not exist.

I am able to experience these women as the salt of the earth and they have so much common sense. Their sound thinking always impresses me and earns my utmost respect. They have the greatest sense of humour that miraculously survived the years of oppression. We laugh a lot and I thrive on it. We work hard and we establish very good guidelines for us to work by. I find this very exciting.

One thing that I know for certain is that they will always be a special group of women for me as they are helping me to iron out a lot of the problems that we encounter along the way. I am starting to test some of the material with them.

Some of it is not working out as I thought it would and I need the women to tell me honestly if I am being effective and if they find the exercises helpful. We have a saying in the group “Do not be nice. Be honest!” It helps keep us on track. Every time that we say this we all burst out laughing because we know that someone is not being honest and we push each other to disclose the truth.

Journal September 1994

“Apart from these workshops that I am thoroughly enjoying, I am also helping Helen as much as I can. Tuesday last week Helen spoke to me and I could hear that she wasn’t coping. There are two functions for the official launch of Ikamva Labantu, one in town and one in the black townships, plus tours of the different projects in the townships, and two weeks before the launch she hasn’t invited a soul yet.

So she and I spent two hours going through the people who she wants to invite and we made a list of about 300 people and organisations, and we asked another friend of ours to also do some phoning for us. From last Wednesday to yesterday I have been totally immersed in organising this. I am enjoying what I am doing.”

One night I run a workshop for the Seventh Day Adventist Congregation in Site C Khayelitsha. Nomsa, one of Helen’s mamas comes with me and it is the first abuse workshops that she has done. She is one whom I am training. I am pleased that I am not doing this workshop on my own. I am also not too sure about being in the

township at night but this is the only time that they can meet, so it is a relief for me to have her with me.

Most of the time I direct the proceedings but it is strange to have everyone speak in a language that I do not understand because there is no control over the material being spoken about. I do not even know if they are getting correct information. They always get carried away with personal examples of abuse and I sit there just praying that they are not going overboard. Nomsa tries to keep me in the loop and I correct misperceptions when I feel that it is necessary. She does really well and I praise her warmly. She feels pleased with herself. She says that the work we are doing is so interesting and that we must get to more churches and present to them. I agree with her. I also have such a wonderful feeling of doing what I am meant to do and that the information is appreciated and valued.

This workshop is difficult because we speak to men as well as to women and I have not worked with men before. It is a breakthrough for me as I am wary of speaking to men. I am also very nervous as I know that so many black men are abusive, because their culture supports men in positions of power and control over women. I am certain that a good number of the men in the group are abusing their women even if they are unaware of this. I try to be as diplomatic and objective as possible so that I do not upset anyone. I am an outsider and I feel the need to tread very carefully.

We start off by giving information about abuse and then discuss why people stay in abusive relationships. We acknowledge right from the start that anyone can be abused, women as well as men. We continually emphasise the fact that abuse kills peace, love and hope. Abuse has to stop. Because it is a church group we emphasise that God is Love and abuse is everything that God is not. Although this is a church group I realise that culture takes precedence over religious principles when it comes to male female relationships. Culture is powerfully and deeply ingrained in the black community.

During the workshop one of the men tells us that no one can tell him what he can do with his wife. He has paid Lobola (bride price) for her. He does not see this as abuse or working against God's Love. He is her husband and he has the right to tell her what to do. She has to do what a wife has to do. This is how it is meant to be. He is not

interested in what we have to say. Whilst Nomsa and I try to bring important information to his attention he is adamant and stands his ground. I am aware that the group is protecting and supporting Nomsa and me. But this man is not at all happy or satisfied with what we are trying to convey to him. He does not agree and he does not see anything wrong with this. It does not conflict with his belief in God.

We give them information on the kinds of abuse, the myths, the cycle of violence. We end the workshop by saying that we do not have all the answers and that nobody can stop another person from abusing someone else. Abuse will only stop when people want to change their own abusive behaviour.

The workshop lasts for an hour and a half and it is well received. I am right not to look for these workshops but to allow them to find me. I shall always take one of Helen's Xhosa women with me each time. I am very new at this. I am happy that I have survived the workshop and I feel slightly more confident to work with mixed groups, especially with men. It is tricky. Nomsa and I are very pleased with our presentation and the men generally receive it very well. Now I feel confident about giving more of these talks to mixed groups.

Journal October 1994

"Politically things are quiet here. Women are in Parliament but things are moving very slowly. There have been recommendations put forward for stricter laws for rape offenders and abusers. A new Family Violence Act is being passed that makes it easier for women to get Protection Orders yet several women from one of the black townships have already been murdered by their abusers this year. Some of these women were in possession of Protection Orders. We have no stalking laws and so what use is a Protection Order anyway?"

The Department of Welfare issued a statement this month that said that 25% of women are forced to flee their homes each week because their lives are endangered. I hear horror stories from my black mamas whom I train and wonder how these women manage to survive. Abuse in itself is horrific but when it is combines with third world violence and no privacy then it is too ghastly to imagine.

For the next few weeks I really get into the swing of things. I run several abuse workshops for Ikamva Labantu and for Ithemba

Labantwana, the principals and teachers of the crèches and pre-schools. I enjoy working in Langa and alongside Helen and her staff when they have their monthly Ithemba meetings. Working with these women is fun and also rewarding. It is still pioneering work.

Journal November 1994

“At the beginning of this year I had this wonderful feeling that the year was going to be exciting and full of growth and happy adventures. When I first typed ‘1994’ I got this excited feeling and was so looking forward to the challenges and interesting developments of Mosaic. I guess that if I had known what lay ahead for me I would not have had the courage or energy to carry through with it all! The first time I marked the year by typing the date I stopped and savoured the moment, the anticipation and feeling of beginning something good for women.

Now that I am at the end of this year, I look back and then look to where I am now. It is sad in a way. It has been like building card houses and having them collapse on me each time I have tried to make another house. And now my one lone card (myself) is resting lightly up against the house of Ikamva Labantu. Somehow or other during this next year I am going to have to ally myself more closely with Ikamva”.

The last month of the year disappears in a blink and I take time to look back. I see where I have come from and where I am now. I have survived a full and challenging year of the greatest upheavals and change. It is a year that I never want to repeat. I am on my own. It is a good feeling to have Helen close by and it seems that this could work for Mosaic and Ikamva Labantu.

Although I have learnt the hard way I am a better, stronger person with more knowledge and experience. Once more, my eternal optimism carries me through. I mentally and emotionally turn my back on the old year and I look forward to the new challenges and developments of Mosaic.

I pray with all my being that the New Year will be kind to me. It brings me a feeling of freedom and hope. I savour the gifts of the moment. I am eager to get going. How clever God is, by not showing us the road ahead.

Meeting Tammy

It is a great start to 1995. I am still working quietly in the community. I am also seriously thinking about drawing up a formal training course for women who want to become community workers.

Journal January 1995

"Suzi, my medium friend is now studying astrology. She originally told me that I would be a main figure in setting up this centre for abused women. She drew up an astrological chart of the centre based on the first fax that we received and she says that the astrograph is so spot-on regarding what we want to do that it is really quite spooky."

Everything begins to come together one beautiful and momentous Sunday morning in January 1995. It is the real starting point of Mosaic. This morning I am completely unaware that I am about to take the first practical steps towards setting Mosaic on its ultimate path to success. I am also unaware that I shall begin a rite of passage for personal growth and learning that lasts me for the rest of my life. It is where I begin to grow up and grow strong. The greatest gift of all is that this morning marks the time when I shall meet and be supported by angels. It is when I take a step onto a committed path. I begin to walk a sacred journey of faith, trust, growth and empowerment.

My husband and I are entertaining some of his business associates and their wives on the deck of our home overlooking the sea in Clifton. We talk together and watch the backdrop of yachts. The beaches are packed with people. There is a slow lazy feel to the morning.

One of our guests asks me if I am working and what field of work I am in. I tell her about my involvement in the community and that I want to design a course to train unskilled grassroots women so that they can help abused women in their own disadvantaged communities. I want to empower these women by making learning

accessible to them. I need to find someone to help me draw up a training course for community workers. I tell her how there is an insane ratio of one black social worker to tens of thousands of Black people. If I train women in social work skills they will be able to fill in some of the gaps in services.

As I share what I want to do she says she can recommend someone to help me and promises to forward the contact details to me. I am so grateful and am amazed at how I should find someone to help me in such totally unexpected circumstances. Following up on her lead I make contact with Tammy Shaffer, a psychologist who coincidentally is related to my sister by marriage. I feel that this is another sign that everything is destined to be.

Tammy and I talk about the family connections and catch up on family news. Besides being a psychologist she is a skilled writer of adult education programmes. She agrees to work with me to draw up a one-year full time training course for community workers. She is lecturing at the University of the Western Cape this year but will forge ahead and hopefully be ready with the curriculum for delivery towards the middle of the year when I want to begin the training course.

It is fun to work with someone who I know. And she truly is the best person for the job.

Journal 29th January 1995

"This week Tammy and I discuss the training curriculum and had a huge brainstorming session. I must sort out the piles of material in my office and I have to give her as much of this information as I can. She will also insert material of her own. It really seems as if this is going to happen now. I am nervous and excited and I am really looking forward to working with her.

Tammy is so skilled and experienced and I hope that she will move quickly. She prepared a questionnaire so that we were focused and I could give her a good idea of what I want the course to be like. She will start to draw up lesson plans straight away, following our agreed sequence. As they come off the drawing boards I can advertise and start to train.

There will be twelve modules. It is a big job. We agreed on the amount that I shall pay her to do the work. She is expensive for me but I appreciate that she

won't be charging me as much as she would charge someone else. She will start now and we shall see how far she goes with the work."

Tammy and I know of no community worker's training course of this nature. We gather all of our privileged years of training in tertiary institutions and organisations and find a way to condense it all into a manageable and responsible training course for women who have received inferior education throughout their school years. A training programme can only be effective if it captures the professional content and practical skills very clearly and very simply. We distil everything to its essence and use lots of revision and repetition. We also use specific training methods. We integrate them carefully with the content and with the women's life experiences so that they can understand the lessons and it will all become relevant and meaningful for them

I look at the piles of papers, lecture notes and journals that I have gathered together from the women's organisations overseas and from my training in teaching, social work in Lifeline and Rape Crisis. There is a lot to organise before I can give them to Tammy. I contact some of my young social work friends who studied with me at UCT and I ask them to help. I am happy to work together with my young friends and it is fun to be together again. We enthusiastically sort through files and boxes filled with the information I have collected

For several days we work downstairs in my office, organising the material into different categories such as Violence against Women, Women and The Law, Women's Health, Community Work, Counselling and Education Models. We label boxes with names of the modules and pile the different papers and documents into them. The office is filled with chatter and laughter and there is fresh energy, busyness and direction once more.

I give my reference material to Tammy who works after hours on her computer at home. All of our combined training, skills, experience and knowledge merge into feeding the course curriculum. We meet regularly. We continually work on revising the programme. I do the rewrites which Tammy regards as being major reworks. It takes months for us to confer on the content and months of hard work for Tammy to put it together and give it to me on floppy discs

and in hard copies. She has written up the first three modules and they look amazing. When I see these modules already written up, the magnitude of this whole operation hits me. I want to get started with the programme as soon as I can in the New Year.

Journal 26th May 1995

"Yesterday I met with Myrtle Berman who was exiled from South Africa in 1976. She is a political activist and worked with the African Nationalist Congress in London. Myrtle and her husband Monty founded the African Resistance Movement in 1961 and were members of the South African Communist Party. She wasn't afraid to confront and oppose Apartheid and the Nationalist Government and they were both detained after Sharpeville. Monty was arrested for breaking his banning orders. They were then threatened with house arrest and they both served time in prison. Then they exiled to London. Myrtle was the 'mother figure' to Hugh Masekela in London and Myrtle can list all the top ANC and activist members as her friends. She is an honest Feminist and Activist of note.

Now they are ready to come back to Cape Town. Myrtle was referred to me by a colleague in Johannesburg who thought that she would be interested in Mosaic. She and I have corresponded for over a year now.

I met Monty last year whilst Myrtle was still in London. We had a good chat. I told him about Mosaic and that I shall train black grassroots women to work with abuse. He was interested and said that Myrtle would want to work with me when she returns to South Africa.

I am privileged and honoured to meet Myrtle. She has a quiet but resilient inner strength. We get on immediately and time just flies for us. I ask her if she will to come onto Mosaic's Board and she says it will be a privilege. We are very fortunate to have a woman of her calibre working with Mosaic. She is a feisty and independent woman and truly empowered. I share Myrtle and Monty's story with Helen and I am sure Myrtle would like to be involved with Ikamva Labantu as well."

Something happens this week that alters things for me. It is amazing how lessons are put under my nose and if I recognise them the answers are all there. The room next door to the Ikamva Labantu office comes available for rental. I do not move fast enough and it is

rented out. I am upset with myself but then I realise that I am not meant to get the room now.

I believe that this is a sign that the community worker's training course is not meant to start until the middle of the year when all modules are completed. In fact, I continue to run workshops for Ikamva Labantu right through to June 1995, the month before I begin to use my new Mosaic worksheets and start training my own community workers. This gives Tammy and me more time, and it takes tremendous pressure off both of us. She is still busy compiling and writing the material at the moment. This training course is avant-garde, on the cutting edge. We are devising a full time training course focusing on empowering poorly educated community women to help other women and I do not know of any another course like this in the country.

In July 1995 Tammy has finished the last of the twelve modules and handouts. She finally hands me my precious worksheets and handouts. I know that I am holding pure Gold. It is hugely impressive and powerful medicine. It is so simple, effective and easy to understand. But the success or failure of the whole project depends on how I can work alchemy with the content, so that everyone working with it becomes transformed in the process.

I can only trust that I shall be guided to perform a miracle. Now I am keen to bring everything to life. I am being given yet another chance and I am making another fresh start. It is a wonderful feeling. I am once again moving forward in a positive direction. I have closed the first chapters of Mosaic working with Kim, Mandy, Phindi and Helen's wonderful staff in Ikamva Labantu. I feel more secure now that I have a clear job to get on with and clear professionally designed worksheets to adhere to.

Womandla! Woman power! It is exhilarating!

Advertising the Course

I am now ready to advertise the course in the community and see if there are any women out there who are interested in doing the training. It is new. I am nervous because there is no guarantee that anyone will want to be trained. I have to be open to any possibilities. In some part of me I am hoping that I will not have any applications for the training course but in another part of me I hope there will be an interest. If women apply, that is fine. If no-one applies then I can melt into the woodwork again. A huge load will be taken off my shoulders. But on a higher level, a part of me knows that I am hooked again. I am back on track and I am cautiously ready to meet the challenge.

I put together a flyer with information about Mosaic and I send it out to different NGOs enquiring if they would like to recommend any women in their organisation or elsewhere for training. The only requirements are that the applicants must be able to read and write English as the course is delivered in English. They also have to be able to support themselves financially for the training year. Apart from this, no educational standards are required.

I need women from different race groups and they have to live in as many different communities as possible as they know their communities well. They know their own cultures and speak the mother tongue of their clients. Clients in their own communities know where to find them and can easily access services when they need them. Most importantly, these women know the community leaders and service providers who live in their areas.

Helen tells me of a room that has become available next door to her offices in town. I am so excited because of the synchronicity of its availability at the start of the course. I realise that I cannot allow this opportunity to pass. I need a venue in which to train my community workers and I rent it even though it is very small. It is conveniently situated right next door to Ikamva so we shall still be part of the 'family'. I shall put in an inter-leading door to the Ikamva

offices as Helen generously allows me access to her reception room and administrative facilities.

Journal 11 May 1995

“BIG NEWS! – Today I have committed myself to premises for Mosaic in town next door to Ikamva Labantu. I am organising the lease which I hope to sign tomorrow. The room will cost me R500 per month. I am grateful to the women from the Lady Cavendish Club who give me monthly donations of between R300 and R400 every month so this will go some way towards helping with my rental. I have to order the tables and chairs etc. which will have to go into the room.

I am working on the final course curriculum with Tammy so that the first weeks of the course are absolutely organised. Then I shall train the trainees! It has been endless work lately and I am not complaining because I have waited for this to happen for so many years and especially for the past two years.”

I am really worried. There has only been one response for the Mosaic training course that starts in three weeks' time. I shall follow up with the announcements advertising the course. I have decided that if I have to train without taking a salary I shall just have to do so. I am feeling at the mercy of so many forces and I do not have control over so many worrying things.

Evelyn at Ikamva Labantu recommends me to contact Phozisa from Radio Xhosa. This is a wonderful way of spreading the news and especially as I shall need to take twelve women onto the course. Evelyn calls Phozisa and sets up a telephone appointment for me. I am so grateful to her, I am going to be on Radio Xhosa talking about Mosaic and the training course, and will then answer any telephone questions from the listeners. If women apply once they hear the broadcast, we can interview them, filling in the slots that are available.

Phozisa calls me at the arranged time and interviews me in English. I am quite nervous speaking on air to thousands of listeners and I have to choose my words carefully. She is very friendly and puts me at ease and compliments me on being able to click the X in Xhosa. I tell her about Mosaic and what I want to do regarding training Xhosa women to be community workers to help abused women in the community. She is generous with the time that she gives me to

advertise the course and gives her listeners my contact number at Ikamva Labantu and asks them to call if they are interested in the training course and want to apply for a selection interview. Now I wait and see.

Journal 4 July 1995

"I was interviewed by Radio Xhosa and it went very well. After the interview I suddenly received calls from women who telephoned into the offices to make appointments for interviews to do the course. It was very exciting.

Now at least I shall have a choice of women to train bearing in mind that I want to target as many communities as possible. And to think that I initially thought that I wouldn't have anyone interested. So this is very good news."

Helen allows me to work with Angela, her social worker. Angela helps me to prepare for the interviews. I find tremendous comfort in the support that she gives me and I am so relieved that I do not have to do this on my own. Her professional opinion is important and is greatly appreciated.

Our interviews will take place in our Mosaic room next door to Ikamva. We have to close our appointment book after more than thirty women apply. I can only select a maximum of twelve trainees as the room is small. Even twelve women plus me, will be a squeeze.

Each of the thirty interviews lasts approximately half an hour. The women have to fill in a questionnaire and answer the questions that we ask them. I want to know if they are working and what kind of work they are doing, if they have any community work experience, if they know what commitment and compassion mean. I ask them if they have been abused as they can then understand more fully the position of abused women. I want to know if their families will be supportive of them because they will have to study for a year without earning a salary. I also want to know if they can survive for a year without earning.

The women who we interview have notably different levels of confidence, life experience and community experience. They range in age from young women who have just left school to grandmothers. I realise that almost every one of them wants to help their people. They are all presently unemployed or are in menial or tedious

domestic employment. Only one works as a volunteer with a community project.

We conduct the last of the interview sessions on Friday 11th July 1995, a miserable, dark wet winter's morning. It is raining heavily. I feel the cold easily and I am chilled to the bone. Most women arrive late as they have to rely on public transport to get into town. They are dripping wet with sodden umbrellas, wet shoes, wet jerseys and jackets. The office is cold and smells of the damp from their clothes. We have a small reception area with a few chairs and a kettle and mugs for hot tea and coffee whilst they wait to be interviewed.

I try to put myself into their positions and make every attempt to welcome them so that they feel comfortable and not so anxious. I offer to hang up their coats and make them some tea. The Ikamva staff also help to set the women at ease. They are wonderful. I hope that I have chosen the right people. It is a big gamble that I am taking.

Journal 6th July 1995.

"Two weeks ago I was so worried because only one woman had applied. I felt that my whole reputation was at stake saying that we would have ten women on the course when not even ten had applied. But then more applications were received and by Monday I had eight women booked. On Tuesday after I was interviewed by Phozisa we couldn't keep up with the requests for selection interviews. We shall carry on with the interviews until Friday.

I am so relieved and now I can start thinking about the next phase of Mosaic. I wonder where this will take me. It is the big unknown journey and I am going to have to draw strongly on my faith at every turn. I am nervously excited."

It is interesting that not too many NGOs refer applicants to me although Jean comes to us through Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa, and Dawn, Alice and Bertha through the Catholic Welfare Development. Noxolo, Lulu, Caroline, Sheilla, Rena, Gloria, Ntombi and Hilda all apply as a result of the radio interview.

It is very difficult to make decisions for selection based purely on the interviews. I realise that the women will present themselves differently to us physically and verbally for this brief period of time. Most of all, during the interview process, I have to switch into

another mode of being and use my keen observation skills and my intuition to read them on a deeper level.

I have a vague idea of their life experiences as a result of the brief information filled in on their questionnaires and the basic answers shared during our meetings. Instinctively I try to select those who show compassion, genuine feminine kindness and seem bright enough to understand what I shall be teaching. All of their schooling has been second-rate and many do not even have school leaving certificates.

We choose some women because they are the only applicants living in two of the targeted areas. These women are usually the best of the interviews from their areas of residence. I am not certain that they will cope during the year or are right for the course. But I have no choice if I want to work in these areas.

Generally speaking I can see that a lot of basic teaching will have to take place with all of them before training can begin. Most of the women come in at a very simple grassroots level with poor education, especially the older women. I am thankful for the teaching skills I learnt when I taught the young school children as I am going to have to use these skills a lot. Everything is part of the big unknown.

Angela is a big help for me but we have differences of opinion when she wants to select someone and I am not sure if the applicant is suitable. I know that the selection process is vital to the success of this training and that the final decision has to be mine because the trainees and I are in this together. It is going to be difficult enough even with the right people in the programme. It is just them and me and none of us really knows what we are in for.

After the last of the interviews take place Angela and I debate the final choices. Two women are my definite choices. I feel very comfortable with Caroline from Khayelitsha who seems bright and smart. Hilda, the last person to be interviewed has such poise and maturity and carries herself with such dignity that I feel strongly that she will be an important member of the group. Many years later she and I shall work together outside of Mosaic and create another NGO called Samila, mainly working with perpetrators of abuse. In addition, Angela and I are impressed with Dawn from Mitchells Plain, who

had just completed her 7th Grade. She seems very intelligent and I think that she will manage the workload.

Nine Xhosa women and three Coloured women are finally selected. They live in ten different communities spread in and around Cape Town. We choose three women from three different sections of Khayelitsha as there are well over one and a half million people living in that vast community. We choose two from Nyanga and one each from Langa, Gugulethu, Masiphumelele and Mbekweni (a semi-rural township near to Paarl). The three coloured women in the group come from Lavender Hill, Mitchells Plain and Elsie's River.

It is difficult for me to call the 'unsuccessful' applicants to give them the disappointing news that they have not been selected. So many tell me that this is what they have prayed for all their lives and that it was an answer to their dreams. I soften the blow by saying that they can reapply for the next training course although I do not even know if there will be another course. However, I know how I would feel if I were in their position.

We phone the successful applicants who are all thrilled and thank me for choosing them. Each of these women starts their own incredible journey in Mosaic from the time that they hear about the course, attend their interviews and are eventually selected. The rest of their journey with Mosaic will change them forever. But the story of their lives prior to their selection feeds into Mosaic at every turn.

The story of Mosaic is our combined narrative with all of our individual voices and life experiences and they contribute to the life-changing journey of us all. Each of our footsteps eventually leads us to our point of meeting and to our Place of Destiny.

Funding Proposals

It is the 15th of June. Now that the day of reckoning is almost on me, and although I have help from Helen and Angela, in truth I feel alone in this whole enterprise. I have to attend to so many things and have so many practical matters to complete before I can even begin to train these women. The buck begins and stops with me.

This morning I woke up worrying about how I am going to furnish the room and pay for everything that I have to buy in order to set up for the training course in two days' time. I do not even have chairs or desks for the trainees. When I spoke to Helen this morning she suggested that I buy large steel folding tables and plastic chairs. This is a cheaper option for the training room and it should be effective. A white board is very expensive so I shall stick newsprint or flip chart paper onto the walls. We shall just make the best of what we have.

What is worrying me the most is that the women will find it expensive to travel into town? They will not be able to earn anything during their training year so I shall have to pay their daily transport costs. When they start to deliver their services to their clients in the different communities they will also need money to travel in the townships. So I am going to need funding to cover all these expense as well. It is quite daunting.

I am using my own money but I only have a certain amount and I am worried that I shall not have enough. I ask my friends if they know of anyone who would want to sponsor the trainees. And I ask my special friend, Sheryl who has set up and marketed several successful strategic tourist developments and projects in Cape Town. She is greatly respected, has many contacts and always has her finger on the pulse. We work out that it will probably cost R6,000 to cover expenses to train one trainee for the year. This includes annual rent, training materials, a small stipend for me as well as travelling costs for the trainees. I have to find sponsors.

Sheryl suggests that I send a proposal to Peter and Linda Biehl, parents of the late Amy Biehl. I know about Amy Biehl. She was a Fulbright Scholar who was based for a year at the University of the Western Cape working with voter education and registration for people who would be voting for the first time in a democratic South Africa. A few days before she was to return home to America in August 1993 she was murdered in Gugulethu.

Her murder sends shock waves around the Cape Town community and particularly as it happens during the build up to the first democratic elections in April 1994. This was the time when political tension in the country was rapidly escalating. Everything was in turmoil and everyone was understandably worried and uncertain about the future. The fear and tension were real, especially for most white South Africans who were afraid of the 'Swart Gevaar', the 'Black Danger', with which they were threatened for decades. After forty years of white domination and black repression we did not know what the future held for any of us. Many white South African families left the country and those of us who stayed behind braced ourselves for the unknown. It was shocking and frightening

The radical militaristic Pan African Congress (PAC) actively toiled and chanted their chilling slogan 'One Settler One Bullet'. Many people the world over expected us to experience devastating reprisals, black on white, and so did many of us in South Africa. An inevitable blood bath was predicted.

It was within this political milieu that Amy drove her black friend's home to Gugulethu, one of the hottest beds of activism for the PAC in the Western Cape. It was a highly volatile, unsafe township. Internal warring within the different factions in Gugulethu was regularly reported in the media. Amy entered an extremely dangerous place at an extremely dangerous time. She became the perfect target for the radical PAC youth in Gugulethu. They saw her as One White Settler and they murdered her. At the time of the murder I wondered how a young white woman could take such an enormous risk by going into Gugulethu. But I also speculated that she might feel safe, protected by her black friends in the car. Perhaps as a young foreigner she simply did not understand the extreme danger that she was getting herself into.

At the time there was extensive and sensational coverage on the front pages of all of our major newspapers. Peter and Linda Biehl were pictured on many public occasions with prominent political and religious leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Bishop Tutu. They also received much publicity in their own country.

Peter and Linda identify with all the black people who struggled and died during the forty years of Apartheid. At all times they voiced their forgiveness for the crime. They had empathy for the four young black men who murdered Amy. But Peter and Linda also believed that Amy 'gave up her life for our country'.

In 1995 two years after Amy's murder, the Biehls are still recognised as celebrities and are a hot topic of conversation. When I tell friends and acquaintances that I am sending a funding request to Peter and Linda Biehl asking for sponsorship of a trainee they voice differing opinions about the Biehls. Some are impressed with the Biehls' great understanding and their forgiveness for their daughter's murder. These friends have admiration and respect for the Biehls because of the manner in which they handle their heartbreak. They trust that they are sincere in their forgiveness. There is a lot of support and sympathy for their loss. Other friends believe that the Biehls have turned Amy into a political martyr and use their daughter's death to further their own personal interests. Through the advent of Amy's murder the Biehls are enjoying all the privileges that entrée into the highest social and political circles entails.

My friends question their unconditional forgiveness of the murderers. They do not agree with Peter and Linda that Amy 'gave up her life for our country'. Amy did not die fighting all the years for freedom from Apartheid. She was not here during the turbulent years of the struggle. She was simply a young foreign student who came to Cape Town for a year to work with election registration and was in the wrong place at the wrong time. I have sympathy and respect for Peter and Linda who lose their daughter in the worst possible circumstances. I am hoping that they will be interested to work with me in memory of Amy by empowering black women.

Sheryl tells me that the Biehls want to become involved in projects in South Africa in memory of Amy. Peter and Linda live in California USA but they visit Cape Town regularly. She thinks they

would be interested in funding a women's project such as Mosaic because Amy worked with and had admiration for black community women.

It is June 1995 and I am ready to send off my funding request to the Biehls. They still have valuable and important connections with political leaders and I hope that through our association with them they will also be able to help us to promote Mosaic and support us in influential circles. Mostly, I hope that they will sponsor a trainee.

I carefully word the covering letter requesting funding of \$1,500 to cover the fees of one student for the year's training. I take my sealed envelope to the post office together with two other funding requests to local funding organisations. I stamp the envelopes, bless them and carefully drop them into the post-box and send them on their way. I 'see' them departing and I envisage them returning with positive results. Now I can only try to be optimistic and wait for the replies.

I have not heard from the Biehls. It was a chance that I took and as with all the other funding requests perhaps it will also come to nothing. With or without sponsors, we shall have to begin the course. Hopefully I can find some money during the year when we start to produce results and funders can see the benefits of the programme. I must just keep on trying and I must keep strong. I become nervous because training starts so soon.

It is the 12th of July. I receive a phone call. Peter Biehl contacts me from the States and tells me that he has received the document and that he and Linda will be coming to Cape Town shortly. They would like to meet with me. My heart races when I hear his voice. He tells me that they want to investigate various local community projects for possible support through the Amy Biehl Foundation that is set up in the United States. The timing of their visit is absolutely perfect because I start the training course next week.

The Biehls arrive. I am excited and nervous as I drive into town to meet them. I walk briskly to their hotel in Church Square. With a spring in my step and hope in my heart I enter the lobby and approach the reception desk. I ask for Peter Biehl.

He comes down into the lobby and I immediately recognize him. Peter has a large powerful presence about him. A big ego. He is

greeted with deference by the staff at the desk as he informs them that he will be in the coffee shop should anyone ask for him. Some other people in the hotel also recognise him and greet him. I am suitably honoured to be meeting with him.

He is very friendly and he leads me into the coffee shop so we can chat informally. Linda joins us shortly and she is also friendly. I feel confident and comfortable and rather chuffed that I am with these two current VIPs.

Peter tells me that the Amy Biehl Foundation is a poor Foundation as most of their donations of \$10 and \$20 are given to them by students from Stanford University where Amy was a student. They do not have a lot of money in the Foundation and can only make a small contribution if they involve themselves with Mosaic. I readily agree that any support that they can give to Mosaic will be gratefully accepted. They want to know all about me and Mosaic and why I am doing what I am doing. It is important for me to reassure them that I am suitably qualified to run the training course. I want them to have confidence in me and support me.

I tell them that I firstly trained as a primary school teacher and then I studied Clinical Remedial teaching. Three years later I returned to the University of Cape Town to complete a Bachelor of Social Science degree. I majored in Psychology because I wanted to understand the psychological aspects of children's learning disabilities. During my final year of studies my interests changed from children to women. I returned to UCT and completed a four year Social Work degree to follow my passion to work with abused women in the community.

I also share my vision for Mosaic. I briefly outline what the training course entails. As I speak to them I feel that they are interested in what I am saying. This gives me hope. They are keen on the programme particularly as it is a grassroots project for the empowerment of black women. They also like the fact that the women will be given transport fare to come to class, thereby ensuring regular attendance. They are especially pleased that I am eager that they keep in touch with the trainees.

We finish our meeting at the hotel coffee shop and I walk them down to the Ikamva Labantu offices and introduce them to Helen.

They are impressed with Helen and her set-up. They are talking about supporting Helen with one of her projects too. I indicate that Mosaic is included in the Ikamva Labantu's organisational map as Ikamva's Women's Project. Then I open the inter-leading door and escort them into the adjacent room that I am going to use for the training sessions. It is full of steel trestle tables and plastic chairs and there is not much space to move in, but truly it is my pride and joy. I am so excited to show them that I have a venue, Mosaic's first home base.

We return to their hotel. Before I leave them Peter says that they are limited with funding but they would be happy to sponsor one trainee. I am grateful to receive this gift from their Foundation. Peter also says that he will try and help us further with funding through contacts that he has in the United States.

We say goodbye and I suggest that they come into class the following morning on our first day, and meet the trainees personally. They are very keen to meet the women. Driving home I review the exciting afternoon's events. I wonder if their visit will make an impact on the trainees in the morning.

I return home tired but happy and hopeful that we can establish a mutually beneficial relationship between Mosaic and the Amy Biehl Foundation. I like Peter and Linda and I look forward to working together with them in a close supportive partnership.

I am completely unaware of the consequences of this partnership. It continues way beyond the time when we meet and we start working together. And it forces me to open my eyes and survive one of the darkest nights of my soul.

First Day

The morning of July the 17th 1995 dawns. I am up early on our first big day. I do last minute computer printouts, gather piles of papers and things that I may need and I put them into my bag. I make a snack for lunch. Before I leave home I check that I have everything that I should be taking with me.

My precious cats follow me from room to room and watch me closely. Misty penetrates me with his intense green eyes. He is definitely not a cat. He is a person. He wants to know what is up. Suzi meows and rubs herself against my legs. I almost trip over her several times. They sense that something is different as they finally take up their waiting positions at the front door. One part of me wants to stay at home with them because I know that today is going to change my life forever.

However I have no time for procrastination. The Universe shoves me out. As I close the front door behind me I am conscious that I am entering the great unknown.

I am justifiably apprehensive. Despite previous precarious steps in the community this is the most significant step I have taken in my life. It is a watershed. I am on the brink of an enormous life change, a huge learning curve. I shall never be the same person ever again. I know that it is going to take much more from me than simply following the course material.

I am excited, nervous, but grateful as I drive into town in the early morning traffic. It is a dark gray cloudy day but everything is in sharp focus and my senses are heightened. I am finally going to work with the women who will shape my life and mine theirs. Today for the first time we are going to work in our very own venue, our own home for the next eventful year.

I enter the tiled lobby of the building and take the lift up to the 4th floor. I walk down the dimly lit passage past Ikamva Labantu's offices. With a sense of ownership I turn the key of the door to Mosaic's room. It has an early morning smell similar to my classroom

in Grade One. It is a musty smell that brings back memories from all those years ago.

I am in the venue well before 9 a.m. arranging and rearranging the furniture to try and make space for us all to fit in. Our room in Spin Street is so small. There are two trestle tables, thirteen chairs and there will be thirteen women – plus myself and my small desk. I trip on the legs of the plastic chairs that are in my way. The tables can only fit at parallel angles to the room. I wonder how we are going to manage in such a cramped space especially as there are some very large women in the group.

I wait for everyone to arrive. Time moves in slow motion. I think of how much has already transpired to get me to this point. I think of my visits to women's organisations here and overseas. Working with Phindi, Kim and Mandy and how I nearly gave up the dream when they left Mosaic. Working with Helen. Finding Tammy and developing the training modules. Selecting the trainees and finally renting our own premises where I am now going to train.

I can hardly believe that I have come so far along this road. This phase is closing and another most important phase is almost about to begin. I also think about the Biehls and wonder how they will fit into the group on our first day together.

At last the trainees begin to arrive in ones and twos. I feel somewhat outnumbered as the room begins to fill with people and it is already crowded with classroom furniture. I am genuinely happy to see everyone and I am very relieved that they have all arrived on this important first day.

I greet them by name and welcome them in as upbeat and friendly a manner as possible. I want them to feel at ease and comfortable in a place in which we shall spend the year learning and growing together. I want this to be a safe space. I want them to like me and trust me so that we can get the most out of our time together.

They are a mixed group ranging in age from Noxolo who is 21 years old and who has just finished her schooling, to Lulu, a grandmother of 49 who is two years younger than me. There is Gloria a tall graceful young woman who looks like a model and Sheilla who is extremely large and round. There are women of light and dark complexion, some who seem openly extrovert and some who seem

very quiet and retiring. I am fascinated to see them all together as a very diverse group with whom I am going to spend my year.

I introduce them to each other. They size each other up and try to orientate themselves in this tiny overcrowded room. They look nervous and curious and are interested to see who else has been chosen to be together with them for the year.

We deal with the lack of space. We fold up the trestle tables, stack them against the wall and ring the room with the plastic chairs. We all sit down in the squashed 'oval' circle. It is a new experience and we all feel a bit strange, self-conscious and exposed.

I thank God for the small room and the limited space so that we can use the circle to interact. The circle is exactly right. It lends itself to the ambiance that I want to create for stimulating learning to take place. I want us to learn in a relaxed informal venue where the energy flows. Actually, the circle makes the room seem bigger than it is. Not so claustrophobic. It definitely gives us breathing space and room to move.

In the circle we will all be exposed to each other. No one can hide away. We will learn to read each other with our eyes and just a quick look will send messages with the speed of light. Nuances will be easily picked up. There is always the opportunity to interact with the whole group at the same time. Connection is easier without barriers or pieces of furniture blocking the communication between them and me, their trainer and facilitator.

The ancient circle used from the dawn of time in spiritual, healing and teaching groups will become our *modus operandi* for learning, sharing, growing and creating. I see it as a feminine space, the nurturing womb, where we will all be reborn through the love, care and support of ourselves as women. Our layout is now perfect and the tiny room solves the problem for me. A con is now a pro.

Once everyone is seated I take a big breath. For a brief second, time stands still and I am suspended. A part of me feels like an objective observer. I also know that this is actually happening and it is no longer just *The Dream*. There are people in this room who have high expectations of me and who are committed to the course. We cannot turn back. This morning is the starting point of our journey together and I feel it opening up into the future. I have no clue as to

what lies ahead. It is a risk for us all. But this is the reality right here and now.

I warmly welcome them all to Mosaic. I say how I am sure they are all feeling rather awkward and nervous because if I were one of them I would be feeling the same emotions. But I am sure that they are feeling excited as well. They smile and nod in agreement.

When Peter and Linda arrive I tell the trainees that I have invited the Biehls to join us for today. I introduce them one by one to our trainees. I am so happy to see the Biehls and they seem happy to be with us. They immediately are welcomed as one of us as the circle expands to include them. The energy around the circle is awesome.

I give everyone the programme for the day. First they will share with us all and then afterwards we shall visit Langa where the Ithemba Labantwana teachers will be meeting. They all introduce themselves to each other and to the Biehls, saying which areas they live in and telling us a bit about their lives before coming to Mosaic.

Noxolo who lives in Langa says that she has just left school. Jean tells us that she lives in Macassar and that she used to work in restaurants as a waitress and a grill hand. Alice tells us that she comes from Paarl and used to work in a factory. Ntombi from Nyanga has a shop and sells meat. Sheilla also from Nyanga tells us that she has been working at a hotel. Caroline and Hilda who are both from Khayelitsha, and Lulu who is from Gugulethu tell us they were all in domestic employment before coming to Mosaic.

Several of the women have been involved in community work. Gloria tells us that she helps her mother with community work in Masiphumelele. Dawn from Ottery has been involved in community work, working as a volunteer in Mitchells' Plain. Rina from Lavender Hill has been doing voluntary work in her community for a long time. Bertha from Elsie's River has been working with the Catholic Welfare Department in her crime-ridden community.

In order to make them feel more comfortable in the group I ask them to please share some of their impressions of how it was for them when they realised that they were chosen to do this course. This is easy for them and they share readily. Everyone leans forward to hear what is being shared and the Biehls are also captivated.

Noxolo speaks confidently. She is our youngest trainee. *“After the interview I felt that this is where I belong. Really all my childhood just came back to me, to know where I was coming from and now this is where I am going to be. It was like things were coming at the right time and I felt so good. I really wanted to start immediately. I was looking forward to see what this is all about.”*

Jean continues. *“Okay, I don’t have a phone in my house. The only person who has a phone is my sister who is staying at C Section. So my son came to my house to say that ‘Sissie sent me to you to come and give you a message from Mosaic and you must go on Monday with a pen and a cup’. And then I said ‘Oh a pen and a cup. Maybe I did get it.’ And you know my son became happy when he heard that. And then I said to my son ‘I wonder my child where am I going to get money’? But I did get money to come.”*

Hilda then also speaks with confidence. *“After work I called my husband from the tickey box. I called to find out if there was a phone call for me and then he said to me ‘A lady phoned and she said you must bring a cup and a pen’. And the way I was feeling on the way home. It was wonderful. By the time I got home I said to my husband ‘Didn’t I say to you that I shall get a place’? I was so happy.”*

Caroline who I sense will be our ‘talker’ speaks to us. She engages easily. *“Wow! Then on Wednesday, I still remember that day, I was at work and this lady came and said ‘Come quickly I think it is Mosaic’. And all the way to the phone I was saying Mosaic because I didn’t want to forget the name. I quickly took the phone and when Rolene said hello I said ‘Yes, Rolene it is me’ and she said ‘Caroline you are accepted. Please bring a pen and a mug. The tea is provided but the lunch is for you to buy’. I was so happy but then the feeling changed. The fears came and I felt this ‘bad luck’ feeling. And I thought ‘What am I going to do about my work and my accounts’? All this was going through my mind. Then I shared this with my husband and he didn’t support me at all. For him it was like ‘why are you going to do this course now because maybe you could get called for the second course? What are you going to do about your work and your accounts’? And I was crying and I phoned my mother and she said ‘This is an opportunity of a life time and if you don’t take it, it is up to you my child, but I feel that this is the right thing for you’. And I went back to my church and I told the pastor that my husband was saying this and he said ‘Sissie you were desperate, and you asked and God gave it to you. Now I’ve got nothing more to say. It is all in your hands’. Then when my husband got home I told him ‘Tomorrow we are starting in town and when you leave in the morning I want you*

to leave money for me to go there'. He looked at me and he was angry. But it was OK. I wrote a letter to say that I was leaving my job and I gave it to my sister to give to my employer. Today I came to class."

When they all finish sharing their stories the Biehls thank the women and tell them why they are in class and that they are going to sponsor a trainee. They also tell us a little about themselves and about Amy and her life. Before they leave the room I ask everyone to hold hands. I want the Biehls to hear the trainees pray and sing like Helen's women do when I train them in Khayelitsha. I ask who will lead us in prayer and Lulu volunteers. We pray to God in Xhosa whilst holding hands. Then Sheilla starts singing a magnificent hymn in her rich deep voice and the Xhosa women join in. I feel goose bumps all over. Prayers and hymns are so integral to their wonderful African culture and they all know the words and choruses from attending their churches. It thrills me every time I hear Xhosa women sing. I am lifted to an elevated space where words can sing. This profoundly spiritual experience heightens the vibrations in the room. The hymn's energy flows powerfully from one to another. It crosses the centre of the circle and forms a web of steadfast ties that will increasingly bind us closer together throughout the year. Their singing uplifts our spirits and calms any anxiety or awkwardness felt in our new group.



First picture taken on the first day

We all gather together to have a picture taken with the Biehls. This is an important picture. It tells a story of our first day in class.

We prepare for our visit to Langa where the Ithemba Labantwana women are attending a meeting. Then we close our room for the day and make our way downstairs to climb into Ikamva Labantu's minivan and Helen's car for our field visit to Langa. For the Biehls and for our trainees it is a perfect introduction into the type of community work that they will be doing. It is exciting to do this on our first day at Mosaic. Before we leave Uluntu to return to town the women all thank the Biehls warmly. Everyone is grateful to them for their sponsorship. Peter and Linda are excited to be supporting us. . They are now also interested to work with Ikamva Labantu. Having them with us is a great success. They promise to visit Cape Town again in the near future and we look forward to having them back with us at Mosaic

I am now totally aware that it is the greatest privilege of my life to be here at this time journeying with these women. I suddenly realise that I am not alone. Whatever it takes and wherever it leads us, we are all in this boat together. We are going to have to hold fast and look to each other for strength and courage to get us through the toughest year of our lives.

But I believe that together we can make it happen. On our first day at Mosaic we all begin to create personal ties and memories to keep with us and to reminisce upon for the rest of our lives.

Creating Bonds

Our second day dawns and we are open to whatever the day holds for us. Today we start with our first module of the training course, the Orientation Module.

There is a slightly easier atmosphere in our room as we recognise familiar faces and we greet each other in a friendly way. The chairs are where we left them so we settle down into our rather 'squashed' circle once again. It is interesting to see how everyone sits in the same place as yesterday. They seem to feel grounded. It seems to be their security move.

I do not know these women so it gives me the opportunity to interact with the whole group at the same time. I notice how they are vulnerably exposed to each other and to me. It is extremely difficult to hide anything from anyone. I can see who is not paying attention, who is emotional, who understands the content or who is nodding off to sleep.

We begin the day's activities with our go-around. We exercise our early morning voices as each person takes a turn to speak. It allows us to touch base with each other once again. I feel that it roots us. The go-around also acts as a springboard for me for the lessons that follow because I know that I shall have plenty of material to work with from what arises out of their sharing.

As I address each of them by name I ask "How are you today? How did you enjoy yesterday and what would you like to share with us this morning"? Everyone has a turn to share any specific thoughts with us. Today I am fully aware of the messages conveyed in their voices. Some are confident and some are shy.

Bertha talks about the visit to Langa. *"Yesterday when we had our outing to Langa as well, so it was quite a full day. It was a different experience and I never want to change yesterday for anything in my life ever. Going home when the day was over I just wanted to share with my children about the day. And experiencing a different culture. You know Langa was the first time for me to be in the township and experience it as well. We went to Ikamva Labantu in*

the hall for their day care centres' and crèches' meeting. There was lots of singing and people, and the atmosphere was just electric and this became part of the whole day. Linda and Peter were with us as well. So it was a different day entirely in my life. I couldn't even sleep last night. The day was filled with excitement and anxiety too. You also explained the different modules that we are going to do – the different parts of the training. But a lot happened yesterday because of the visitors and the outing to Langa. The first day was a jam packed day."

Noxolo confidently sums up her impressions of our first day with the Biehls. *"Yesterday was wonderful with the Biehls in the class with us. And now, I think we are really onto something because people from America want to be with us. And to tell the truth I didn't even know about this thing with Amy. When it happened it was just something that happened in Gugulethu and it was really not affecting us. But now there are these people coming and telling us real stories about what happened there. And they are white people and they still want to work with the black people that killed their child. So now I think I have come to the real world because maybe if I wasn't here with them yesterday I wouldn't understand what happened. It would just be a story. These people are humble and they are really excited to be with us and it is like they are at home with us so this is like something else for me too."*

When I repeat the question, most of them answer "I am fine thank you. I enjoyed yesterday. I have nothing else to share." Several repeat the responses of the person before them. Some speak very softly and some speak out quite confidently. Some of the less-shy trainees answer more specifically and I take note of who they are.

I notice that Lulu the oldest trainee who is two years younger than me, speaks in a baby voice that is so soft that we can hardly hear her. It is also quite a whiney voice like a child who wants something from a parent and cannot get it. I am going to have my work cut out for me if Lulu is going to become a confident community worker.

It is important for them to know that their voices tell us so much about who they are. As they speak there are countless nuances in their voices that they are going to have to learn to differentiate and read. Once they are in training they will quickly realise that a voice can indicate how a person is feeling, if people are being honest in their communications, if they know what they are talking about and if they are feeling confident or not.

In order to be effective educators, trainers and healers, they will have to consciously choose what they want to say and how they will say it. This is crucial. At this stage they do not realise that apart from the knowledge that they will gain, their voices will be their most useful and powerful instruments and that they will have to be trained to use them properly. They will learn how to do this in their next module, the Assertiveness Module.

I ask them about how it was for them when they heard about their interviews, and when they came in for it. It is something that they all experienced and easy for them to share.

I tell them that they can speak as long as they wish in the go-around. There is no rush. Not everyone is comfortable to expose themselves in front of each other. However, some of them are happy to tell their story.

Hilda is once more confident to share. *"It was on a Tuesday when I was at work when I heard about Mosaic. I was doing the ironing for the people I worked for and I was crying. I had to stand doing the ironing in one place for 3 hours. The radio was on and I heard this lady on the radio talking about this women's course. And that particular day, I was asking myself questions 'For how long am I going to do this? Am I going to be a domestic worker for the rest of my life?' Those were questions that kept on coming to me. And as soon as they came to me I used to feel terrible and I cried. When I heard about this course I couldn't phone that day because I wasn't using the phone of the people I worked for – I never used it. I think it was the following day when I called. I was at home and I called to find out about this course and then I was told that it was almost full. And I said to my husband 'If I was meant to be in this course whether they say to me it is nearly full or not I shall get it'. And I felt it right inside me that I shall get it. It was good coming in for the interview. Firstly, it wasn't the first time that I was going to interviews. And on the way out after the interview I was feeling so confident. I was really walking on cloud nine. There was something that was telling me I am going to a new world. I went to the taxi rank to take the taxi home. When I was in the taxi there was this woman who asked me 'Mama, tell me, what is the meaning of this word compassion'? And it came to mind that this was the word that I was asked there in the interview and I wasn't really sure. I didn't really have the meaning of this word. But to me it meant some sort of caring so I told her. Then nothing was said after that and the lady and I went different ways. It was Caroline."*

We all laugh and the two women share their amusement with each other.

Then it is Jean's turn to share. She talks clearly and she takes her time. *"There is this Planned Parenthood Association in Khayelitsha very close to my house and when I do my washing in my yard in the morning I see women going in and out. I thought that I could also go there because I am a woman and they were teaching women about life skills and teaching them how to sew. I started to learn sewing with them. One day we were told that there were going to be visitors at PPA but I couldn't attend. I had to go with my child to Red Cross Hospital. Afterwards I went to my neighbour to ask her to tell me what happened and I asked her about the visitors and she gave me a piece of paper to phone this place called the Mosaic organisation for women. I wondered 'what is this for'? But I knew I must phone even if the public phone was so far for me to walk to. I went with my paper and phoned. The lady told me that I must come for an interview. This was another thing because I never had an interview in my life. What is it? I wondered if I must go or just leave it. But I didn't tell my husband about this because he was a person who was always putting me down. He stopped me from going to night school. He didn't encourage me that time so this time I thought I was not going to tell him. When my mother asked me where I am going and I told her I am going for an interview she said 'God is great'. She thought it was an interview for work, 'God is great my child. Yes I shall look after your child'. I came for the interview even though it was raining. The interview. Oooh, it was okay for me to come for the interview. Firstly I was interested, but in my mind there was the question 'How am I going to answer the interview?' Because firstly I didn't know what Mosaic was really about and I didn't have a chance to ask on the phone because my money was so little, you know, for a public phone.*

I went there for the interview. Firstly I woke up and took my child to my mother and then I went back to the station for the train. I was early in town. When I was about to reach Church Square I told myself 'No, let me go back home. Let me not go there'. I was cold and I felt hungry. I stood in the road. People were passing me. It was raining hard and I was leaking. And then I thought, 'No - let me go for the interview, I am already wet - let me go'. When I got there the people were busy with the interviews. Matthew from Ikamva asked me 'Don't you want to take off your jacket Sissie, you are so wet'? I said 'No Boetie, thank you.' And he was always passing me and he said 'But you look nervous'. 'Yes man, I am nervous because I don't know what it is all about but I am here because of that woman on the radio. But I don't know what we are

going to do'. And then I went in. You know it is the first time to meet you a white woman an Umlungu, and I don't really catch the way you are talking. I was worried how am I going to hear you properly? I told myself if I don't understand I shall ask. And okay, but I did understand. I was very nervous. On my way out, it was funny because I didn't feel cold like before the interview. Now when I rushed to the train I was not so tight and cold. Maybe it was nervousness."

Noxolo, who sits next to Jean then begins to contribute. "In fact my mother found Mosaic for me. She overheard from the radio about Mosaic and she phoned me because she was at work and I was at the township in Langa. She gave me the number and the name of the person that she heard over the radio. She said that there was this women that was talking about abuse. And that's how it started. When I heard about the training it was like a fulfilment of a dream because I knew that I didn't have a good education and now if I came to this course it only requires speaking and writing English and at least I can do these things. For me it was like a blessing. This is where I thought I belonged because I think that it is within me, working and helping people. But I didn't have skills of how to help people. And so I phoned. When I went to the interview the weather was good. It was a shiny day, a sunny day. When I got to the interview I first met with this humble lady with a broad smile. It was the first time that she had seen me and already when I came in she knew that's it is Noxolo coming in. I was surprised that she knew my name.

And then that lady was Rolene Miller and she took me to one office and Angela was there and then I greeted Angela. And then we sat, myself, Angela and Rolene. And also in my case it was the first time that I ever went for an interview because the only job that I knew was to help my mother and my mother is a domestic worker. And I would help her cleaning the house. Dishes, ironing, that was all that I knew and I was never interviewed for that. Now it was the first time for an interview. I didn't know what the questions were going to be and how I was going to manage to answer them with a lack of education. But funnily enough I don't think I was nervous. The questions I remember most that were asked were 'What do you understand about compassion and confidentiality'? I think it was those. There were lots of questions and although I was having no education, I still think that I did understand them. I think there was a little light on that. I think, because I used to listen to the radio and to read magazines and I did like to go to the dictionary and find out about words, I used to be very curious about that. I think also while I was at school English was the subject that I liked best, so I think I did manage the interview".

Then Lulu speaks softly and we strain to hear her. *"When I heard the person over the radio interviewing Rolene and saying that all women must have their pens and write the details of the number of this place I quickly got a pen and I wrote the number. While I was waiting for my son-in-law to come with my sick grandson, because I was going to take him to Red Cross Hospital, I said 'Let me try this number'. I tried. To my surprise the phone rang and I didn't know this phone was going to ring because I thought everybody would be on the line and it is going to be engaged. I said 'My God what am I going to say'? The lady on the other side answered and I said 'Well I don't know what this is all about but I heard that it is a women's course' and she said 'You know what, you are lucky because you are one of the last people who can interview for this course'. 'Oh. And what is it all about?' and she explained to me that it is about abuse. I said 'I am also abused.' When I was coming to Mosaic for the first time for the interview, it was, you know, even the word 'interview', I'd never been in an interview before. I was looking forward to this interview although I didn't know what I am going to say and what is going to be asked to me. I think my appointment was at 1 o'clock and I was in town about 10 o'clock already.*

I was roaming around because I was so anxious to be in this interview. When I got to the building, I went up there to the fourth floor and I was waiting near the lift because I didn't know which room to go to. I even forgot the name of the person I was meant to see. I was standing there and I didn't know what to say. Then this lady came out of the lift and I didn't know that it was Rolene. She went into one of the rooms and I followed her. I went in and the lady asked me what I am coming to do and I said I am coming to an interview. I was interviewed by Rolene and Angela and they were asking me some questions about the course I wanted to do. They asked me if my family were allowing me to do this job. I said 'Yes'. I was very confident of all the questions that I answered. I was answering you know, honestly. There was something that told me that this is where I belong. When I finished Rolene said, 'Okay if you are going to be in the group, you'll get a call and if you have not made it, you might be in the second group'. It was about time for me to go out and while she was talking to me, telling me that, I said inside me 'God you did bring this to me. I didn't even know what it was all about. I don't want to be in the second group. I want to be in this group'. I waited and it was the 12th of July when I got a call that I was accepted and that I had to come to the course that starts on the 17th of July half past eight to half past three. And I said 'Thank you my God'."

Alice is keen to share *"When you phoned me to tell me that I was accepted, Ooh Ooh Ooh. My family said 'Yes mama now you are going to work'. Everybody was overwhelmed in the house."*

Dawn shares her painful story of how she has been abused and then accepted into Mosaic. *"In 1983 I married a man 16 years my senior a month before I turned 15 years old. At the time of marriage my first born son was 3 months old. There were many reasons that led to this relationship and marriage. However, a few months into the marriage I experienced the first horrific act of physical abuse towards me. Leading up to this incident there were incidents of verbal, emotional and psychological abuse. He was extremely jealous and possessive. The abuse also increased at this stage and that led me to apply for an interdict, now called a Protection Order. In order for me to cope and remain sane and feel worthy I got involved with voluntary work through the church and worked with kids living on the street as well. Through this I attended various workshops with Catholic Welfare and Development and they informed me about MOSAIC advertising for Women to apply for a Community Workers' Training Program to work with Abused Women. At this time I had no direction and I was recently divorced. I had no confidence when I was caught up in pain and darkness and I did not know how I was going to go forward with my three children. And then I heard about Mosaic. I came for an interview and Wow! What a gift to be accepted onto the training course. Mosaic is God's greater plan for my life. I walked into Mosaic on 17th July 1995 and I know it will change my life forever".*

After everyone speaks I acknowledge them and praise them for sharing openly. Right from the very beginning I want to establish a caring and respectful relationship between us all. I want us to experience each other as human beings and not as racial beings. This is a first for all of us and we must accept our differences without judgment so that trust and consideration can be created.

Caroline then speaks out confidently *"It was a cold raining day on that Friday and I was in town and didn't even know Church Square and my worry was 'How is it going to be' and 'What questions are they going to ask'? I had to ask my sister 'What must I wear'. I didn't know what to wear because it was my first interview. And I was late and I thought 'Yo!' And I started to panic and I phoned and Angela answered and gave the phone to Rolene and she said 'Where are you sweetie'? And I said 'I don't know but I am here in town and I can't get to this place'. And she tried to explain but I was blank as she was talking. I didn't know what she was talking about. She said it was next to*

Parliament and I was on the side of Parliament and I just stood there in the middle of the road and it was raining, pouring and I said 'God what is happening now? Am I going to get this or not'? As soon as I was finished saying that I looked across and I saw a building with Church Square on it and I went to the board but there was no name Mosaic. The guy there said this is not 4 Church Square and he showed me where to go. I don't know how many times I was passing 4 Church Square that morning.

I went in wet. I still remember what I was wearing that day. When I got there Ooooh this white lady came with a towel. Wow! She said 'Let me take your wet clothes and put this towel around you. What would you like – tea or coffee?' I kept on thinking 'A white woman making tea for me'? I had my tea and my wet clothes were hung there. I waited because there was someone already in the interview and then I went in. Wow! I think because of the way I was accepted, the welcome put me in that position of calm. When I got into the office I didn't worry about what I was going to be asked. I just answered what I was asked. I was telling myself 'I shall say what I know' because my sister said to me that if you don't know what to answer just say 'I don't know'. I said to myself I shall do that but when I got there I answered all the questions. I was told that there were fifty people that already phoned and there were thirty people that were interviewed and I was the last one. When I left, the devil was playing on my mind and was saying 'Agh man, don't keep your hopes high because who are you to get this from the 30 people who were interviewed?'"

The entire group shares their stories. Everyone is involved. There are little nods and everyone is focused on the speaker. I sense a lot of empathy in this group. I also sense a bonding with each other, by sharing and receiving their personal stories.

I want to know if I have any natural healers and earth mothers in this group of women who people go to in times of great need and who still provide safe havens for their people. I want to know what they wanted to do with their lives when they left school and the reasons why they want to now be trained as community workers.

During this year I am going to ask a lot of questions. There is time to do it, and this is a luxury to share with them in a relaxed atmosphere during the go-around. After their sharing we get down to business. I give each of them a file in which to keep their handouts and their notes.

Sharing Lives

As I look at my Orientation Module worksheet for today, the first lesson is their introduction to Mosaic as an organisation. I have only given myself 30 minutes to do this. A lot of information will have to be absorbed in a short space of time but I am going to try and keep to the time limits because there is much to get through on this first day of training in class.

I pass out the first Handout that gives input about Mosaic, our visions and our goals. Right from the beginning they have to grasp the whole picture so that they can place themselves firmly within the organisation and identify fully with where we ultimately want to go and what we want to achieve. I ask them to take turns to read the handout out loud. They have different levels of fluency. Straight away I can sort out who can really read and who can comprehend what they are reading about and who is struggling.

I am surprised at the level of difficulty in this handout because I was happy with the simplicity of the course when Tammy and I drew it up., I find that there are lots of difficult words and I can see that they are not all sure of the meanings. I realise that there is jargon and many concepts that need to be explained. I stop reading the handout and explain that some of the words are jargon and that jargon is like a secret language that people use and know the meaning of. I try to give an example of jargon that they will relate to. I think of drug addicts and of the gangs and the jargon that they use. We do not know the meanings of these words unless we are in the gangs. They understand what I am talking about. I tell them that we also have jargon in social work and that they will learn what these words mean. It is like a short-cut for us to use a word and know what we are talking about.

It is not easy to unpack a concept and describe what it is so I give an example of something that they will identify with. I give them the analogy of a cake. I say that we do not ask people if they would like some flour, milk, eggs, sugar, butter and baking powder. We ask them

if they would like some cake. A concept is like a cake. Instead of going the long way around and listing all the different things that go into a cake we just say the word but we know what it is and what it is made up of. A concept is also expressed in a single word but we know that it consists of different ideas, thoughts and sentences and when we use it we fully understand its meaning.

When we read about self-esteem in the handout I tell them that it is social work jargon, a language, and it is also a concept. It describes how we think and how we feel about ourselves. We have high self-esteem if we are proud of ourselves, if we have confidence, love and respect for ourselves and we believe that we are worthwhile human beings. We have low self-esteem if we feel that we do not love ourselves and have no confidence in ourselves, are not worthy and are unlovable. When we talk about 'self-esteem' we know that it is jargon and a concept made up of all these thoughts and feelings.

It is important for them to learn how to develop and raise their own self-esteem before they can even begin to think about raising their client's self-esteem. They have to know what it is and also how it affects people in the way that they think and behave.

Apart from self-esteem I explain the meanings of several other words that Tammy and I thought that they might know. But they don't understand them. I explain the words holistic, resources, efficient, effective and lobbying advocates. I am finding difficulty with this handout. I am beginning to struggle along with them and I am not in a very secure space. I hope that I make sense and that they understand what I am trying to explain to them.

During the reading of this Handout they learn that Mosaic's ultimate mission or vision is to stop domestic violence and the abuse of all women. It is the reason for our existence. I explain that Mosaic's vision may not be possible to achieve totally but it is our absolute, perfect dream that we are aiming for.

They read that Mosaic also has several goals and that there is a difference between a vision (mission) and a goal. Our goals are more realistic things that we can work towards achieving now during our training and as we progress through the next few years.

We talk about how the problem of domestic violence is so huge that if we think about it, it is overwhelming. We wonder how we can

ever make a difference. However, if we change one person's life at a time, soon we shall see that we have helped many people who in turn will help others. We shall work step by small step. This is the way that we can begin to stop the violence and make a difference in our communities.

We also read how Mosaic wants to create a great sisterhood of women who are powerfully united to stand together to stop abuse. We want to teach women to lobby for and become advocates for women's rights. I tell them that my most important goal is to help them to develop into strong, confident, knowledgeable women who can be positive role models for abused women who will become their clients one day.

Linked to their own empowerment is the empowerment of abused women. Abused women must be able to build strength and confidence and reach the point where they are able to prevent or stop another person from abusing them. To empower these women we shall have to provide them with skills to raise their confidence, self-pride and self-respect and thereby enable them to find happiness and peace of mind.

We read that we have to build Mosaic into an honest, reliable, responsible and caring organisation that offers a range of services for abused women. We also want to establish our own centre in which we can work and where women can come to us for help.

They also learn that it is going to be important for us to work closely with other organisations. Then we can refer our clients to them and support each other in helping abused women. I ask them to think of leaders and caregivers in their areas and who they can visit in their community next year when they are finished with their training. They will need to introduce Mosaic, and ask them if they can work together with us. We cannot do this work on our own because alone we are weak. If we unite with other organisations we are strong.

By reading this handout they start to understand the Grand Plan for Mosaic. Today everything seems overwhelming in its scope and intention but I tell them that with focus and determination I believe that we can achieve miracles.

How interesting it is to discover the difference between the written worksheets that Tammy and I drew up so carefully and their practical application in class. Taking the lessons off the page and translating them into reality is already posing a challenge for me. I have not even begun the difficult modules of the course and I am already being put to the test.

When they put their first handout into their files and place them under their chairs, I ask them to turn to the person next to them. I tell them that they are going to buzz about what they would like to get out of the course and what really worries them about doing the training. They learn that buzzing means sharing with a partner.

I want to know what their expectations are and what their fears are. I know that most, if not all of them, feel that they are under-educated and not really equipped to meet the requirements of the course. This exercise will enable them to identify with each other in their basic needs and insecurities. The buzzing begins quietly but slowly the noise level rises as they share their ideas with their new-found colleagues. I enjoy the escalating buzz in the room. It is very exciting and sounds like an engine warming up and rearing to go.

When they finish, they stop and call out their expectations to me. They all say that during this course they want to learn more about what it means to be a community worker. They want to learn about each other and about themselves. They want to learn about abuse and how it affects women. They want to know how they can reach out to the community and help their people. They want to know how they are going to work with other organisations in the community.

All of their expectations are written onto flipchart paper and then put up on the wall. We shall keep them as our point of reference during the course and from time to time we shall check to see if we have met them.

Then they call out their fears. These fears include whether the community will accept them and whether they will be able to deal with the danger of threats or attacks from angry abusive men. Some fear that their families may not like what they are doing and may make it difficult to continue. Some worry about how they will be able to cope with changes in themselves and with their families during their

training. They worry about their loss of income. They wonder how they will cope with the work and my expectations of them.

I thank them for their honest sharing. We shall deal with all their expectations and fears during the course of our training. I am sure they will all be answered. But they do not have to worry about transport money because I shall give them transport fare every day. They thank me.

Then I tell them about my expectations of them. It is essential that they attend class every day and they actively participate in the lessons. I explain that we are moving at such a fast pace that if they miss one day they will have missed a lot of information. Then the next day they will find it difficult to catch up with their colleagues and they will fall behind. I point out that this will also affect their feelings of confidence in themselves and they acknowledge that they do not want this to happen.

I am going to demand that they give me their best at all times. We want Mosaic to be one of the most respected organisations working in the field of abuse against women and therefore they have to be the best community workers as well. I am going to train them in social work skills and give them knowledge that other community workers do not have. When I drive them hard and I insist that they perform to my standards, they must know that it is not to punish them. It is to make them into the best of the best community workers in the country.

Today they are getting some idea of what is expected from them and although I do not mean to scare them I cannot afford to be gentle with them either. I have to be honest.

For all their lives they have been subservient. Most of them have been in domestic employment where white women have been their 'madams' and they have been the 'servants'. They have always been told what to do and they have not had to take responsibility or initiative for themselves. I do not want them to be subservient with me and I know that this course is going to demand that they be responsible and take the initiative.

I also do not want to be perceived as the all-knowing powerful teacher. I am here to help them find their own magnificent power.

They have much to teach me too. We are all going to learn an enormous amount from each other.

Next we brainstorm ground rules for creating safety and a well-functioning and productive group. We all need to stick to these rules and regulations during the training course. I ask them to form small groups and brainstorm what they believe our rules should be. The buzzing begins once more.

I write their rules onto flipchart paper. They list rules of conduct such as Honesty, Trust, Caring, Reliability, High Standards, Humility and Good Communications. I am impressed as they also include rules for Absenteeism, Punctuality to class and Respect between people with different cultures. When they have finished their list I add the most important one of all. I add Confidentiality.

I stress that confidentiality is crucial. Nothing that is said in class must go out of the room. The person who shares the information with us is the only person who can talk about it out of class. If we break this rule it will have a serious impact on the person who is responsible for breaking the rule. And we all know how gossip has a way of returning to the person who is gossiped about. If that happens the group will decide what to do about it and I am sure that it won't be easy for the person who breaks the confidentiality rule.

They realise that when they get out into the community they must know that rule number one is about client confidentiality. By breaking client confidentiality, it will damage Mosaic's reputation and we absolutely cannot afford for that to happen.

Alice finally sums up. *"Then when you tell us that everything from the group is confidential and we can talk as much as we like in the class but it is not going out of these walls, it is just for us to share. It is a real learning experience and right from today I am going to start to love the class and my colleagues."*

Finally before we all break for lunch I give them the second Handout containing the different modules of the Course Curriculum and how long we shall spend on each of the modules.

In week one they will complete Module One which is *Orientation to the Course*. The next two weeks will be learning about *Assertiveness Training*. *Women's Issues* will take one week to complete and so will the module on *Women Abuse*. *Dealing with Clients* should take five weeks to complete and includes the *Counselling* module. *Women's Health* will

take two weeks and *Women and the Law* will take one week. There is three weeks given to complete *Popular Education Skills* and three weeks for *Group Work*.

Organisational and Leadership Skills follows with one week's training as does *Financial Skills*. The last module consists of two week's training in *Evaluation and Assessment Skills*. This will wrap up the educational and training of the course. During the next year they will begin putting their classroom learning and skills into supervised practice in different venues in the community.

Their faces say it all. Their eyes widen and they stare blankly at me in full doubt. It is going to be a long and arduous haul. They do not believe that they will accomplish it. But I know that they will. We will have to push and pull them along to meet our goals.

It has been a full morning and we are all happy to take a break for lunch. I see how some of them share their sandwiches with those who have not brought food. It is great that we have a balcony because it is a breathing space even if it is small. Six or seven people can stand on the balcony. It is cold but sunny outside. The smokers light up and puff on their cigarettes. The Xhosa women do not smoke. In fact through my work with Helen's women and now with my women I have not seen a Xhosa woman who smokes a cigarette.

Whilst leaning on the balcony wall they talk quietly together. We have a view of the side entrance to Parliament and they watch people in the street below. I get great pleasure from observing them all as they begin to bond and start to chat with each other during their lunch break.

I sit down at my small desk in the corner of the partially empty and comfortably quiet room. I glance at my notes for the afternoon session. I need to make sure that I know what I am going to do. Then I open the inter-leading door and go into Ikamva Labantu's offices. I share the morning's activities with Angela and Helen. I am excited and they are happy to hear my news. It is wonderful having them next door to me. They really are my support system and I greatly appreciate their encouragement.

Our half-hour lunch break is over far too soon. We have some late comers back in class. Some of them say that they went to get takeaways and the lunchtime queues have delayed them. I tell them

to bring lunch with them from home. It is cheaper, quicker and easier for them. Perhaps the lunch break should be a bit longer but time is tight and there is much to do.

We are back at work in the group and now we need to get to know each other better. In fact this is primarily a trust building exercise. It is our first chance to begin forming good honest relationships with each other. These relationships will be the foundation of our working together. We have to know, trust and respect each other, so that we can work together and learn to be a team.

The exercise that we engage in requires that they share how they experienced their first day in class as well as their first impressions of each other. They can share what happens to them when they leave class after the first day and return home. It is a fun exercise.

Some of their comments are feedback for me and I feel good about how they experience me too. Some of their stories are amusing. We love to laugh in this group and we are bonding with each other through our humour.

Dawn tells us that *"The first day I was really coming to unknown territory not knowing what to expect. In my travels on my way to class I was thinking many things but I was open to the challenge. Getting here, walking into this room with all these women all shapes, sizes and all cultures, it was quite scary. But as soon as I saw Rolene in the room it was immediately a different feeling like we all knew her from the interview even though we didn't know each other. It was good."*

Lulu, the little granny of the group, still talks quietly. But she is open to sharing her private thoughts and feelings with her colleagues. *"On my first day at Mosaic when we meet together I see that we are a different group of ladies. And I've never been working with a group of ladies before. I have only worked in a house with one other maid. I've never been with other women and what I know about a group of women is that they fight and there is, you know, gossiping. Things like that. But in this group when we first meet each other I know I have found my sisters. When I get home from my first day I tell my husband 'You know what? My mother left me and now my father has passed away and I've got no one. But now I've got Mosaic. I also know that I've got God on my side. I've got the Lord on my side so be careful of anything that you do!'"*

She is proud of herself for speaking out because it is the first time that she has ever stood up for herself and she bravely manages to say

these words to him. We applaud her and congratulate her. I know that it is this wonderful group support that is going to be validating and empowering for them all.

Jean then shares her impressions with the group. *"It was my first day at Mosaic. What surprised me the most was when I came here and Rolene said 'Hello Jean. How are you'? I thought maybe I was the last one to arrive because she knew my name. And the welcome, it was a warm welcome. And then I had a surprise when I think it was Sheilla who came into class after me 'Morning Sheilla'. Then when Noxolo came in Rolene said 'Morning Noxolo', I asked myself 'But how does she know us'? That was my question. I told myself 'Mmmmm. This women is something!'"*

We all laugh. I think that Jean is going to be quite a character in our group.

Hilda is the next to share. *"When it was the day that we started I wanted to be here early because I wasn't sure of this building. I didn't want to be late so I was just walking around the shops. And then it was time. When I came into this room at Mosaic I bumped into this lady that I met in the taxi after my interview who had asked me what 'compassion' was. And she looked at me and we looked at each other and she asked me 'Are you not the lady who was in the taxi?' And I said 'Are you not the lady who was in the taxi?' And we laughed. That was Caroline. Otherwise, for me it is the beginning of being in a new world. That's the way that I felt on our first day and that's how I am feeling now."*

I am amazed because it really shows me that the group is courageous to talk so openly. These women are beginning to trust me and are starting to trust each other. Each person seems to be ready to share without difficulty and they enjoy these go-arounds and their different stories that they bring to the group.

They now have to interview each other sharing their own personal stories. They are going to share deeply and more meaningfully about who they are and where they come from. They are reminded about confidentiality and that whatever they share will stay with them and in the group.

I put some questions on the flipchart for them to interview their partners. What did you want to be when you were young? How was it for you when you were growing up? Are you married and do you have children? How are things for you now? These questions are guides for them to follow in finding out about each other. It is our

first real opportunity to learn the first bits of information about each person and about their lives before they came to Mosaic.

Once again the room slowly begins to fill with the sound of their voices. It seems that they are all comfortable talking quietly to a partner. It becomes a safe space to reveal confidential information with an interested colleague. And because the one partner is sharing intimate information it gives the other partner the freedom to do the same. I listen in here and there making sure that each person is OK with their sharing.

There are some tears in the group. I have tissues handy and I am pleased that I remembered to bring them to class. When the noise level drops, they are asked to change and let the other person have a chance to speak. It is structured like this so that this first sharing is an intimate one. They have to trust their partners. It requires a great degree of trust and courage.

When they finish sharing their stories, they then have to share them with the whole group. It is easier to share their life stories that they have shared with their colleague. They take turns to speak and everyone gives full attention to each of their stories. They are amazing in their frankness.

Before Sheilla tells her story I ask her how she spells her English name. She says that she does not know and I am amused. She eventually says that I can spell it 'ei' or 'ie'. I tell her that we shall spell it 'Sheilla' and she is happy. Sheila shares *"Before I heard about Mosaic I had a job as a domestic worker and then I worked in a hotel, cleaning rooms and making the beds. I hated my job. It was always my dream to help people. I always had hope inside myself that one day I would be able to do something useful for my community. I am not married and I stay with my brother who orders me around and treats me as his slave. He demands that I bring him his tea during the day and night, and I have to put in the sugar and I even have to stir it for him. Whatever I do for him is never good enough and he always criticises me. He has total control over me. I am always unhappy and I cry. But I have no other choice because my brother gives me a place to stay."*

Sheilla is very emotional as she tells us her story. She is our largest trainee but she has the naivety and the simple innocence of a young child. I can feel that I am going to grow very close to this woman. Mosaic is a 'dream come true' for her.

Then Alice shares with us. *"I suffered as a child because I never knew my father. It was awful not to know my father. I wanted to know what he looks like and what he does and what he's like. It was hard on me as a child. I needed my father. Everyone who knew him wouldn't tell me who he was. It was painful. Later I worked in a factory for a little bit of money. I wasn't happy at the factory. Then Catholic Caring Network where I was also working at that time told me that they received a notice that there was a course to train community workers and that they wanted to send me for training. I was so happy that they chose me. That is when I came to Mosaic."*

Lulu speaks softly and while she shares she mostly avoids eye contact as she looks down at her hands clasped in her lap. Everyone leans forward in their chairs to hear her story and to focus on her sharing. *"When I was young my dream was to be educated and to have a degree and to be somebody in life but I didn't know exactly what I wanted because at that time black women were only nurses and teachers. I wasn't quite sure whether I wanted to be a teacher but I wanted to be educated to help my people. I wanted to be a 'Somebody'. But unfortunately that never happened. Since I got married I was a person who lost my confidence. I wasn't sure of myself. I remember one time I went to St Francis in Langa to night school because I wanted to do my matric, because I wanted to have an education. And I was going there every evening. My husband always put me down because he didn't want me to have an education. Unfortunately one day we were going to write exams but I burnt my right hand at work and it was swollen. I couldn't go to write my exams. I thought that maybe I was not meant to do this. I stopped myself from going even when my hand was already healed. I didn't go further with my education. Then I heard about Mosaic. I was excited! I knew that this can be the turning point of my life."*

It is moving to hear a granny talk about her personal problems and all the trainees nod in recognition of her difficulties. Quiet Lulu feels our compassion.

Hilda is the next person to share with us. There is something about Hilda that commands attention. I am reminded of her stylish exit, her dignity as she walked out of our room after her interview with her beret perched fashionably on the side of her head. She has an inner calm and is definitely more confident than Lulu and she speaks out clearly. *"As a young child I wanted to be a nurse. I used to admire them wearing that white uniform, with the little white cap. I used to picture myself wearing it. I did go to school until I was in Standard 8 but after that I got*

pregnant and then the father of my child denied that he was the father. Yes. And I struggled. I had to leave school and see that I fed my child. My family was there as long as I was working and sort of buying their love. I made sure that I gave all my money to them so that at least I could be taken as their child again. It was so difficult for me. I used to walk out of the house without food so I could give my mother my money. Then I walked to work. Such a long distance. Then funny enough maybe some of the neighbours would see me walking and then they would ask my mother 'We saw your daughter walking nearly to the hospital – right up there. Where was she going?' Then when I came home I'd be asked where I was going and what I was doing there. But I never told them that the last cent I had I emptied out to give to them.

"Otherwise Ay! My life was a wreck. Really. But I kept on working from one house to the other house until a friend came and told me that she was coming to Cape Town. She had relatives in Cape Town. And I said to her I would also love to come to Cape Town and we came to Cape Town by bus without telling my parents. I said to myself I needed some change. I needed to get out of Port Elizabeth where I was born. I said to myself I needed to see new people, new friends, just everything new. I needed to get away from there. As soon as we came to Cape Town, I called home. I phoned my parents to say that I am sorry that I left home. I just needed to get away for a change. Then they accepted the fact that I was in Cape Town.

"And my child was five years old by then. It was not an easy decision for me but I told myself I needed to do it. Then I found a job. I was the first one to get a job and I was working for wonderful people. When they moved overseas I was doing char work, working five days per week for different families. It was hard work. Very hard but I kept on working. And I was making sure that every month I was sending some money home and the people I was working for they used to give me clothing and everything. Then I sent those parcels home every month. Then I came to Mosaic. That was my life."

Dawn is next to talk and she seems okay to share her growing up years and her abusive marriage. I can see that it is not easy for her to explain what happened to her but she continues to speak. *"At the age of 15, my 31 year old husband abused me physically for the first time. Before he abused me with different kinds of abuse, but now it was physically. I remember being on my knees washing my son's nappies in the bath and he was accusing me about having an affair with a friend of his that came to see him when he was out. I told him that to accuse me was crazy and it is not true. Then he came back into*

the bathroom and the next thing was that I felt a massive blow to my face and when I finally managed to open my eyes as I leaned over into the bath of water, all I saw was blood all over the bath and tiles. I sat in that bathroom for what seemed like hours until I finally managed to lift myself off from the floor and clean myself up. He told me that if I knew what was good for me then I shall not talk back to him. My face was bruised for days and to this day my nose is still a bit skew. I had to hide from my family after every beating and it wasn't easy because we lived opposite each other for six years of my marriage. This was just the beginning of 12 years of abuse in my marriage. At the age of 17 I gave birth to my second son and at 21 I gave birth to my daughter. After the birth of my daughter I discovered that my husband had two daughters from his first wife in the time of our marriage. He denied it but his first wife confirmed it with me when I went to see her.

"In 1994 I discovered that my husband was involved with a 17 year old girl and that she was pregnant from him. I then also discovered that he had lost most of his business interests and had failed to pay the bond on the house and on my car. I took some drastic steps and went for a divorce and called an agent and put the house up for sale. I remember running at night barefoot with my children to a neighbour for help. The police were called many times to arrest him but they insisted that they could not remove him from the property because we were married in community of property. He broke windows and doors in the house and destroyed my property. He would not give me money or buy food in the house or anything that the children needed at this stage and we had to go without electricity for a good few days until my church members and my family helped me. At last I managed to get the house sold and I walked away with everything which was not much after the house was sold. I gave him what I felt like giving him. Now that I am in MOSAIC I feel that I shall receive healing and restoration. I am now going to be a community worker. I shall be empowered to counsel, train and teach other women to take back their power after their abuse. Above all else today I am discovering love and Sisterhood in MOSAIC. Rolene you aren't only our trainer at MOSAIC but you also seem to be a Mother figure. As a result of this training I shall be able to raise my three children. Thank you Rolene. I am convinced that this is my purpose, my calling and my heart's desire to be a vessel of empowerment and to bring light and love to Women who are caught up in darkness and abuse. I am blessed. I give God all the Glory and Honour, because without God I am nothing."

After Dawn shares we all have so much respect for her. As a young girl being married and abused by her husband, we all know that she suffered over the years. We are shocked to hear of all the abuse and we are grateful that there is Mosaic to rescue her.

I ask Jean to please tell us how it was for her during her growing-up years and before coming to Mosaic. Jean leans slightly back as she shares but she shares fully. *“When I was young in Cape Town I firstly wanted to be a police. In my mind I thought that if I was a police, no police would come to my house to ask my parents or my older sisters for their passes or what or what. I was looking at those houses where the police were living and no police were going to those houses. I told myself that I wanted to be a police. Then I went to the Eastern Cape with my bigger sister to go to school there and then I was struggling. I was not struggling about school things. I was struggling about the person who was looking after us.*

“I came back to school in Cape Town but I left because of peer pressure. I had friends who were out of school at that time, they would share things that they did when I was coming from school. They said ‘We went to town doing this and that’ and it sounded so interesting. I told myself the next day that I wasn’t going back to school because I missed a lot while I was busy at school. There were a lot of things that they were enjoying. I didn’t know at that time that it was peer pressure, but now I know that it was.

“Then I found a job in a restaurant. Where I started to work at night time and then I changed to get another job and I moved again. It was also a restaurant. I was a waitress working with no days off, working from 7 to 7. I told myself that I am not going to give my mother a cent because of the way that she was treating me and my baby son. It was the end of the month and I was going to get paid that day. I received a message from my mother that I must give her some money. My grandmother, my mother’s mother, told me ‘My child, she is your mother. She knows what she is doing to you. So give it to her.’ I started to give her all my salary. I didn’t take one cent.

“Then my biggest sister asked me at the end of the month, ‘You are working, you are getting paid but every time I ask you for money you don’t have any’. I said ‘Yes. I am giving my mother all my money. She only buys me a train ticket, that’s all. No pocket money. Nothing. Then my sister said to me ‘No don’t give it to her. I used to give her all my salary and she did the same thing to me.’ I told myself to just give her some money for food and for rent. I started to work when my child was one year old. Then my mother started to look after my child. As I

got paid I gave money to my mother and then she was nice to him and even to me. I worked up until I got married. And then I got married to this man and had two children with him. There were a lot of promises before I got married. I saw that these promises would be fulfilled. I could see that he was a hard worker. I pictured myself in a beautiful house with children. I wanted a happy home. Things didn't go well with him. There was this Planned Parenthood Association and I thought that I could go there. When I would go to the container at PPA my husband would go and find me there and then he would ask me what I was doing there. He would accuse me that I was walking around the township and gossiping there. But they were teaching us about life skills and teaching us how to sew. I started to learn these skills. Then I heard about Mosaic and I am very happy to be here."

Some stories are longer than others but each is an eye opener. We are all privileged to be let into the private parts of each of their lives. These women are amazing. Not only are we pioneering a training course for community workers, but we are also pioneering honest and deep relationships on a woman-to-woman basis, opening ourselves up to healing the great divides of the past.

Vanessa, the only white woman in our group of trainees also shares her story and we are also grateful to her for her honesty. She tells us that she also comes out of an abusive situation at home. It is traumatic for her to share with us.

After Vanessa tells us her story Alice shares that she thinks that abuse is only from the black culture and not from the white culture. Alice is shocked and surprised that a white woman can be abused. She also says that she is surprised because she thought she was the only one suffering until she heard the stories from other people.

During the week there are no major catastrophes or heavy emotional issues brought to the group. We all enjoy hearing about aspects of each other's personal lives that run concurrently with our classroom experiences.

I know that, as a rule, trainers do not share their own personal information with their trainees but I know that it is important for me to do this. I need to relate to them as a woman, as a human being, and it is important for me to risk some of my own story. It makes me less of an outsider and brings us closer together as a group. In

addition, I have too much power if I know about their situations and they have no reciprocal understanding of me.

I tell them something of my own journey and of my life. I tell them that I have just left my husband Lawrence because I could not live in the relationship anymore. We were both hurting each other. We are different people and want different things for ourselves and we see the world very differently. Our family is split up as my son is staying with my husband and my daughter is staying with me. I talk about the difficult times that my children have had at their schools and how this affects me as their mother. I now also struggle with the fact that my youngest sister has cancer. I worry about her and miss her as she lives in Canada.

I only share what I believe is appropriate and I make it brief. They need to understand that my life is not the perfect life that they probably believe it to be. I can see that they appreciate my sharing and are surprised that I give this to them. There is some levelling of power and I know that this is what I want and it is the purpose of my sharing.

I then give them each an Evaluation Form to fill in. Right from the start they must get used to evaluating the day's work. They must write about what they found most valuable from today's class.

It is 3.30pm and the end of the first day of training comes to a close. Before we leave the room we hold hands and close our eyes. We sing our hymn and pray for a safe journey home and a safe return in the morning. I can see that this is going to be our ritual closing to send us safely on our way. It feels good to pray for this protection.

They line up and I give them their transport money. Then they gather up their bags and files and leave the room chatting and laughing with each other. There is already much for them to share with their new-found friends.

When I get home I am tired but happy. I sit down and quietly review the handouts and notes for the rest of this week. I jot down my thoughts about our first real day of training. I call my parents to tell them about this exhausting but momentous day. They are happy for me.

Journal 18th July 1995

"I can't help wondering what Tammy and I were thinking about when we designed this course. Some of the content is too sophisticated and complex. I wasn't aware of this before meeting with the group. English is not their first language so the handouts should have been simpler. I am going to have to improvise in split moments and improvisation is probably going to be the name of the game for the year. I shall have to use every single trick in my book and get used to it. I must accept that this is what a pilot course is all about.

"Never would I ever have believed when I started teaching that I would be teaching black women one day! The thought would have scared me silly and I would have dismissed the idea completely. But here I am doing exactly this! And today I loved every minute of it.

"Today more than ever, I have resolved to push, pull and squeeze these women until they are all in shape. I just need lots of patience, ingenuity, courage and strength. And faith!"

Apart from them sharing and learning, on our fourth day my psychic friend Suzi comes into class. She does a healing meditation set to music with our women. As the meditation continues she works behind each woman giving them personal energy channelling and healing. She has them visualise themselves in a garden and playing as children. As soon as she says this I think 'Oh no' as I know that some of the women would act strongly going back into their childhood memories. But I did not expect an exhausting traumatic experience that was to last for three days. Straight after the meditation Rina becomes violently ill and runs to the bathroom four or five times. She says that she has never experienced anything like this before. After the session we speak about their reactions and many of the women cry again. It is only at the end of the third day that we can leave the Inner Child and move onto other work.

Then after our meditation Suzi does an interesting Tree of Life Drawing Exercise with them. She says that they need to draw a tree that symbolises themselves. The roots will be their lives before coming to Mosaic. The trunks are their lives at the moment. The branches are the different areas of their lives. The leaves are the information that they have gained during their lives. The fruits are what they hope to achieve in the future.

We put the list up on the wall. They get going immediately. The most interesting aspect of these drawings is when they explain what they draw. They learn much about themselves. Suzi points out that several of them have no roots to their trees at all. They have not drawn in their lives before coming to Mosaic. It is quite a revelation for them.

Today Vanessa speaks to me. She tells me that she has thought long and hard but she has decided that the training course for community workers is not suitable for her. She tells me that she is sorry but she will have to leave the group. The rest of our group are keen to carry on with their training. Everyone sadly bids farewell to Vanessa and wishes her all the best. We are sorry that she is not going to continue to contribute to the life-sharing of the group as she has done until today.

I know that the women are all looking forward to being together again next week for our new module on the Role of the Community Worker.

I fall into bed early and as I close my eyes I am instantly asleep. An earthquake could not wake me. As I say when I am deadbeat 'I do not even know the colour of my sheets!'

Our Group

In this Module on the Role of the Community Worker we start with our ritual go-around when I check to see how everyone is feeling. Is there anything that they would like to share with us?

Go-around time is a healing time, a time for laughing, crying and identifying with each other. We never know what anyone will bring into the group and what will happen as a result. I tell them that they can talk about those matters that worry them because it is group therapy time.

If not enough time is allocated to sharing first thing in the morning their problems from home will be brought into the classroom no matter how hard they try not to do this. Much of what happens to them in their homes and communities will influence how well they cope when they are in class. It is important to shift any troublesome thoughts and emotions that can stop them from concentrating on the day's programme.

Today's Module contains the roles and values necessary to become great community workers. Once again they are given the first Handout. But it is not simple. There are concepts and jargon contained in it.

We read it to see how many of the values they will need to become community workers. Some are easily understood such as being organised, caring, reliable and non-judgmental and also having physical strength and compassion. Then we read the more difficult words and I have to use my hands, my facial expressions and my body to get the meanings across. I have to think quickly and most of my explanations are adlibbed.

'Diligent' is one of the words in the handout. I tell them that it means to be careful and to concentrate and pay attention to details. A person who is diligent is hard working and she focuses on her own commitment to doing the work to the best of her ability.

To 'persevere' means to 'keep going' especially when the going gets tough. If we persevere, we are focused and we carry on working in sometimes difficult situations. We do not give up.

The word 'timid' in the middle of 'intimidation' gives a clue to the meaning. People in positions of power and control like to intimidate others and 'put them down'. These people are abusive and none of them should be intimidated in our group. They must be strong and powerful.

'Knowing our own limitations' means that they must know their own strengths and weaknesses. It is not a weakness to admit that they have limits. There are some areas where they are not sure of themselves or strong. But it is important to know this and not be afraid to admit it.

The definitions and meanings are not completely accurate but they need to be given some idea of what the words mean. There has to be much creativity, repetition and simplicity of teaching methods to reveal the meanings. It is important to translate and explain the words and concepts. They write the meanings down on their Handouts and we move on.

One of the concepts that is brought to their attention is the difference between 'sympathy' and 'empathy'. It is crucial that they grasp this difference right from the beginning. If they do not, they will not succeed in becoming confident community workers.

It is extremely dangerous for them to be sympathetic and they cannot sympathise with their clients. I see their eyes widen in surprise. They are not sure that they have heard me correctly. They are quick to respond. They say that surely they have to sympathise in order to identify with their abused clients. If they do not feel sympathy their clients will not be able to trust them. They will think they are hard-hearted and unable to understand their personal difficulties.

I stress that they can only be effective if they keep their distance from their clients' problems and they do not take on the emotions of their clients. They feel that it is heartless and cruel not to feel their clients' pain. They want to know how a community worker can be unfeeling.

If they sympathise with their clients, it means that they carry all of their client's hopeless, helpless situations along with them. They will sink with their clients into the depths of a pit of despair and they will not be able to get out. They will cry with their clients and become weak and useless.

Most importantly, they will not be able to get their client's problems out of their heads. They will think of them in the taxis going home, when they are making food and when they go to bed at night. If they have many clients and they take on all of their stress and pain how will they be able to cope with their own lives? I guarantee that they will become sick and tired. They have their own problems to think about and worry about. Their clients have to take responsibility for their lives. They dare not sympathise. They are only there to help their clients and not become their clients.

My words are clear cut and they listen carefully. Some of the women start to get the idea about not participating in their emotions. They nod in agreement. Some, like Alice and Sheilla, do not really understand how they can change their behaviour.

There is a much healthier way of supporting and helping their clients, and themselves. This is called 'empathy'. Empathy is the only way for them to safely deal with their clients' problems and maintain their own health and energy.

Empathy is almost like sympathy but it is very different. Empathy uses their skills to help their clients and not their emotions. They must focus on their professional skills and use all of their knowledge and skills to help. They must not become involved in emotions. They will certainly feel emotionally upset when they hear the clients' painful stories. However they must remind themselves that in order to help their clients they will need to have a clear head. They cannot get sucked in.

By empathising, their clients will know that their community workers care about them and that they feel for them. But they will also know that their community workers are strong and that they know what they are doing. This will help their clients to develop their own strength. Only when they understand the differences between empathy and sympathy will they know how to behave and respond to their clients. They will know if they are being weak or being strong.

As I speak to them about empathy and sympathy I realise that for all of their lives they have sympathised with other people. They have drowned in sympathy. Empathy is a skill that they are going to have to learn to master.

‘Depression’ is another concept that is also referred to in this Handout. Some of them know about depression and that people who are depressed experience deep sadness, misery, despair and lose their love of life.

Depression, for me, is profound anger that grows from deep inside and does not have the ability to come out. Sometimes people do not even recognise that they are angry. The anger can come from early childhood years or relationships in later life. For certain reasons people do not or cannot stand up for themselves. They cannot say what they need to say or do what they need to do with the people who they are angry with. They swallow this red-hot emotion and it burns up their strength, energy and their desire to live.

Their role working with abused and depressed women will be to educate them about depression and help them to get their anger out. They must ask difficult questions and help their clients to answer them. In this way their clients will find hope and some solutions to their problems. They will make positive life changes because of their community worker’s skill and knowledge.

Our women know that their support and the light of understanding will not remove the abuse but their clients will hopefully come to know why they are angry and depressed. With a bit of luck they will not fall into a deep, dark, black hole from which they cannot emerge. Skills of empathy will begin to make them feel confident again.

As difficult as it may be, they now begin to realise how to behave in the community. For those who doubted me initially, they realise why empathy is a key skill that they must develop. At last these women understand me.

Oh dear, we are on a roller coaster ride again. Up and down. Up and down. The going is tough and the training is getting difficult again. There is a lot of information that needs to be explained in this module.

I go as slowly as I can and hope that it is not too much for them to take in so early in the training. I decide that we cannot learn about the differences between a conversation and counselling. We will discuss the differences in our module on Dealing with Clients which teaches them about a 'social conversation' and a 'professional counselling interview' later on in this course.

Some exercises that we do during this module are relaxing and give them space to breathe. This includes a visualisation, a first experience for most of the group. I tell them that this visualisation is a guided meditation, and will help them in their future work.

I ask them to relax, sitting comfortably in their chairs with their eyes closed, concentrating on their breathing. I take them through a green field surrounded by mountains and hills. As they go down a path carrying the tools of their trade they look down at them and realise that these tools are powerful for their work. They need to see what they are and how they can use them. They see a door and realise that this is a place where they are going to work. They enter the place and visualise what they are doing there. They spend time in this place and then when they are ready, they move on. When they leave, they feel strong and capable. They feel the power of their caring and their healing glowing out of them and lighting up their path. In a slow and powerful manner they continue to move from place to place doing their healing work.

When they open their eyes, they stretch and yawn and I sense that they would have liked to remain with the visualisation for longer. I am happy that they are all open to letting themselves relax so completely. It seems that they have found valuable insight during this exercise. I leave their insights with them because meditation is powerful and the images get dissipated in the sharing.

The following Handout requires them to grade a list of important things in their lives. They have to find the most difficult to give up and what they would find the easiest to give up. They knuckle down to complete the list on the handout. In the list of the 'easiest things to give up' I have a silent giggle when I see that one of them writes that she can easily give up her 'dustband'. It is a wonderful vision of her husband in a dustbin.

When I see that one of them finds it easiest for her to give up her sexuality and her home and all her possessions I realise that she has interpreted the question in the wrong way. These would obviously be the hardest things for her to give up. English is tricky and they get confused.

Other new experiences for them include filling in Johari's Window. This is a technique that helps people understand their behaviour and their relationship and with themselves and with others better, and how they interact with others. They have to fill in four squares in a box, a grid. Johari's Window is a very useful tool for gaining insight into themselves and from other's perspective.

With Johari's Window they describe their own personality and then their partners describe how they see them. The first square or grid is the part of themselves that they believe they and others see in themselves. The second square contains aspects that others see but of which they are unaware. The third square is the private space they know about but hide from others. The fourth square is the unconscious part that neither they nor the others see.

It is something that they have never done before and they look around uncertainly before attempting the exercise. I make myself available if they need help. It is fascinating for them to gain these insights into their functioning. They have never had to look at themselves in relation to others in a group. They are on a great learning curve that is taking them on a journey of self-discovery way beyond their greatest expectations.

In between these long sessions that require their focused concentration I make sure that they take a break either for tea or for lunch. They need to go outside onto our balcony and breathe some fresh air. Often when they do this I go next door and when I pass reception sometimes I find Peter Biehl's immaculately printed faxes curling out of the fax machine.

Peter prints in a regular and attractive capital script and my heart leaps every time I see his distinctive messages coming through. I tear them off and take them next door to share with the trainees. The Biehls tell us of their admiration for our women and for the work that we are doing. They tell us that they have spoken to people in the States who want to support us. These faxes lift our spirits and remind

us that we have friends who are halfway across the world and who want to take care of us. We appreciate their writing and asking us about ourselves.

During the week the women come to understand that community workers have to take care of themselves and be able to love themselves. If they do not care for themselves they cannot take care of anyone else. If they do not love themselves they cannot love other people. I suspect that a number of them do not love themselves and have low self-esteem. It is going to be exciting for me to see them develop and grow into strong role models for women in the community.

The pressure is on at all times. As difficult as it is for me, I already know these things. They do not. And many of them have been out of a learning environment for many years. What they experienced at school was an 'indoctrination of subservience' and a subtle acceptance of their low and poor self-esteem. For them school was an exercise in slave mentality and intimidation.

I have to change their mind set. They are born strong and beautiful, in this country however they have been powerfully overtaken by the Whites. Now with our democracy, they are some of the forerunners of powerful Black women. They have to learn other lessons about themselves and turn the tables around. At the same time as I explain the importance about their growing strong I know that I am also growing strong. This is a challenge for me as much as it is for them.

The group then learns about the huge responsibilities that Mosaic's community workers will play. They will become trainers, educators, counsellors and role models for their clients. They will have to deliver accurate and comprehensive information about abuse and domestic violence. They will have to network and market Mosaic to other role-players and service providers in the community. In order to do this they are required to know enough about Mosaic and our services. They need to feel confident and on a par with established service providers. They will learn how to give extra services to clients such as accompanying them to court to get Protection Orders against abusive partners. They will have to attend and organise rallies, events, marches and campaigns.

I tell them that this is where they are heading and they have to be everything that they read about on their Handout. Again they are stunned into silence. When they voice their alarm bells, I assure them that by the time they are finished their training they will be confident and skilled community workers and will manage to do all of these things easily. I know that there are many tasks and skills that they will have to learn but I am optimistic and I tell them they will be able to do them all.

This is much harder and more complicated than they ever anticipated. I suspect that some of them feel that they should not have applied in the first place. If some of them had shown any indication of leaving I suspect that there would have been several others close behind them.

On our last day of the week we recollect how it was for them on their very first day of this module which seems like so long ago. They are asked to recall their first impressions when they arrived and when they met us all at the beginning of the week. It is a way of gathering our joint experiences and closing the first small circle before moving on to our next module. It is also a way of building our 'her-story' from the beginning.

Noxolo recounts: *"On our first day that I came into Mosaic I met everybody. I am a baby. On this first day I see this bunch of old women and I am the little one! How is it going to be? I see how Caroline is looking. She has a navy doek on her head and a cream jersey with a navy skirt and with big glasses and her eyes look at me like? I am thinking 'Now how is it going to be?'"*

When Noxolo is sharing she is laughing as much at her own first impressions as she is laughing at the women in the group. We recognise this and no one appears to be offended. We laugh along with her. We seem to grow comfortable enough with each other so that we can laugh at our idiosyncrasies together.

I am grateful for all the humour that acts as a release for us over and over again. I encourage laughter with each other and not laughter at the expense of each other. It is fun and we can also start to laugh at ourselves. Humour is going to be a very necessary part of our interactions. Humour will release the love and bring light into days that are going to be dark and difficult.

Because we move at such a swift pace, recapping all of the previous day's activities also has to take place each morning after our go-arounds. Tammy and I build recapping into every module of the course. It gives me a chance to see if the previous day's information is understood. It gives them the opportunity to refresh their memories and to remind each other if they have forgotten any information. During recapping sessions I ask many relevant and probing questions and no one goes unnoticed. I quickly find out who knows what is going on, who remembers what we have learnt and who is going to give me a hard time.

When they know the answers they feel chuffed with themselves. I enjoy asking the least suspecting trainees to answer my questions. I learnt to do this when I taught in the schools. It wakes everyone up. It is quiz time and I keep all of them on their toes.

Our first module works out really well. The structure is there for me to hang the lessons onto and where necessary I am able to adapt and mould the material to suit the group. I am grateful that the lessons that Tammy and I designed have been successful in implementation. It has not been easy but I am pleased with the result so far. I am now looking forward to the next module that deals with the most important aspect called Assertiveness Training. I am slowly getting into my stride but I sense a steep climb ahead.

Behaving Assertively

The Assertiveness Training module is really important because it teaches them about their own behaviour and how they conduct their relationships. It is a personal self-empowering life-changer and the crux of our whole training course. Without changing their behaviour they cannot become effective leaders and community workers.

The concern for me is that in two short weeks, it is probably going to be overwhelming to teach them to behave assertively. They normally behave in non-assertive and aggressive ways. They have not heard the word 'assertive' and now they will have to incorporate it into their behaviour. At the end of this training I want wise, strong and powerfully educated women to emerge. They are going to have to be outstanding and we cannot accept anything less. Those who cannot cope, will have to leave.

They all speak Simple English and they have fundamentally poor ways of communicating. Furthermore, in class they have to practice their assertive interactions in English but they will have to complete them practically with relations and friends in their home tongues of Afrikaans or Xhosa.

Some of them are in abusive situations similar to their future clients. This model empowers them in self-confidence. It helps them to stand up for themselves when they are abused. It is even more tricky and sensitive as they will be working with clients who are depressed, hopeless and helpless. They will have to mediate in crisis management with client's families. They will have to work through their own abuse and become assertive role models for their clients. Disempowered abused clients need strong self-assured women to believe in them and guide them to change.

In class they will use role-plays to understand how they usually behave in conflict situations. At home they will have to role-play with family or on their own so that they can become assertive. The class will have to give them feedback and they will have to practice over again and get it right. They will learn how to say 'NO' when they

automatically want to give in to their abusers. They will have to claim what they need. They will learn how to deal with their anger, negotiate conflict and handle criticism. To get their message across they also have to learn about non-verbal cues such as their facial expressions, tone and level of voice and their body language.

They cannot feel guilty for standing up for their rights and refusing to obey their abuser's commands. They cannot feel sorry for themselves. They will have to understand how they are responding to someone else's abusive behaviour and they must learn not to swallow the guilt, the blame and the shame.

I do not know how some of the women and particularly Lulu, the timid grandmother of the group, will become personally empowered in ten days. How will they be able to change and strengthen their personalities and be able to stand up courageously and pass on these skills? It is the first time that the very core of twelve different women and their personal relationships will be attempted to be changed.

I have to remember that these women see me as being strong and in control and they do not know how insecure I often feel. I shall try to change each one of them sensitively and positively.

Journal July 1995

"Change is one of life's certainties but I always resist it and I try and stay as much as possible in my comfort zone. In class I am wanting to change the women's lives and behaviour!

There's no comfort zone for me now on any levels – personal or professional. I am wrapped up in the training course and the women, I tend to forget that my personal life runs alongside my Mosaic life. My personal life at the moment is not stable and although I wanted my divorce because we haven't been making each other happy for a long time, it is still not easy for me.

I am grateful that I have the time today to look at what's going on with me and to analyse why I am feeling so anxious. I must be honest with myself. I must accept that these personal challenges are all affecting my frame of mind and my sense of self. I must be careful not to neglect myself and my personal situation even though I have been doing this since I started this training course. I am not a super-woman. I must just do the best I can. That's all I can do."

On the first morning of our second week they are greeted warmly and everyone takes their seats. We start the go-around. I ask them all to think about the past week (was it only one week ago) and briefly summarise what we accomplished in our first module. I then ask them to put each chapter and experience from last week onto a little shelf in their minds – somewhere that they can always refer to and reach.

They are reminded about keeping confidentiality with people's personal stories and how what we discuss has to be kept inside the group. They receive an agenda of the work that we are going to have to complete during this module.

Once again the level of English is just too difficult for them. It is too academic and they are unable to remember or relate to the words or the concepts and jargon. I juggle and replace difficult words and reshape what is written. And each day is packed with information. I note down the corrections next to the lessons on my worksheet paper.

I have to become teacher before trainer. I am back in the classroom and I enjoy diving into my teacher persona. I feel confident about breaking down the meanings to their simplest essence. It is wonderful when I see surprise and understanding light up their eyes. It is hard for me when I get blank looks and dull eyes. They are truly a mixed group of intelligence and capabilities. Their experiential and learning challenges keep pushing me on.

The words Assertive, Non-assertive, Aggressive and Passive Aggressive are introduced. They are written up onto our flipchart paper on the wall. I explain that these are the only four ways in which people can behave towards each other. This is new for them. Before today they have behaved in unconscious ways. Now they are surprised to know that each type of behaviour has its name.

They have to fully understand them and know how they operate. If they do not, they are lost. Recognising and knowing these four behaviours is one of the fundamental principles of this module. It is the way that they can monitor how they respond to others.

Firstly I begin with Aggressive behaviour which I explain is a violent, verbal, emotional and physical reaction. I address this one first because they all know how to be aggressive. They have all acted

aggressively before with husbands, partners, family and friends. They discuss some of their aggressive interactions and we laugh. We tick off aggressive behaviour on our list, because this one is very familiar.

Then I tackle Passive Aggressive behavior, which is Non-Verbal Aggression. I tell them that Passive Aggressive behaviour is a destructive non-verbal, physical response. If someone speaks to me and I respond without words but with attacking body language then I am being passive aggressive. Some of them show us Passive Aggressive body language and we all laugh. They agree that their Passive Aggressive response to their aggressors' abuse is a negative non-verbal response. No one wins. We tick off Passive Aggressive behaviour on our flipchart paper.

Now I ask them to tell me about Non-Assertive behaviour. No one can answer me. I explain to them that Non-Assertive behaviour is when somebody's behaviour is weak and apologetic. A non-assertive face is weak or quietly frightened and a non-assertive person tries to become invisible and disappear. A non-assertive person will usually avoid eye contact and has a soft or whiny voice. When the abuser starts attacking them they repeatedly say 'I am sorry, I am sorry'. They shrink into themselves. It is as if they admit doing what they are accused of doing, hoping that their abuser will stop tormenting them.

Non-Assertive body language gives the abuser the power to be even more attackingly aggressive. If the person cries, it will make him even angrier. He has the power and control to meet his selfish needs and the abused person's own needs are crushed. An abuser has no respect for Non-Assertive behaviour.

We discuss how they mostly behave when someone is abusive towards them. Our discussion is intimate and they willingly share their stories. We all agree that the first three behaviors are not helpful for meeting our needs.

Assertive Behaviour is the last behaviour written onto our list. This is the only behavior that will allow us to regain our power and strength for ourselves in meeting our own needs and wants. It is what we shall work towards becoming during the coming two weeks.

In being Assertive we have to state our thoughts briefly and clearly. We have to believe in what we are saying. Our voice has to

be controlled and not too loud or soft. Our body language has to be firm and assertive.

We shall practice and refine all our skills in class before we move onto the next module. They will eventually be comfortable and self-confident standing alone and upright before clients and crowds of people and they will be able to talk assertively about domestic violence and abuse. At the end of this module I hope that they will be much more Assertive and proud of standing up for themselves. They will no longer be Aggressive, Non-Aggressive or Non-Assertive because it does not work for them.

I am working with humble grassroots women, who have not had any power in relationships in the past. For these reasons they are afraid to take positions of responsibility and leadership in the community. In 1995 women can lead and many women do lead even when they are not acknowledged for doing so.

Our first democratic elections took place one year ago. They have always been subservient to whites and to their husbands and elders in their patriarchal community. Their submissive behaviour has to do with being women and disadvantaged in our society. Now the group must acknowledge their community leadership skills and in this way value these skills in themselves. They must look out for themselves assertively, who they are, and how they can feel strong and assured inside themselves.

In discussion they realise that being Assertive is not being bossy and controlling. It is confidently being assertive and teaching their clients to make personal decisions and empowering them to take action. They have never done anything like this before. I recognise that it is a scary concept. It shows on some of their apprehensive faces staring at me and in certain of their bodies slightly slumped back into their seats. Watching me and listening to me, I know how intimidated I would also feel. But it will change.

I ask them to think of a time when they felt uncomfortable or undermined as a person. They state how it feels for them to sacrifice their needs and they share their stories with the group.

Lulu shares. *“My husband’s sister came to visit from the Eastern Cape for the first time. I bought her clothes and many things I gave to her. What surprised me is that when she was ready to go back home she showed me my big beautiful*

curtains that I got as a present. She asked me if she can have them. I couldn't say 'no' although I really didn't want to give them to her. She took the curtains and I felt upset with myself and with her."

Sheilla tells us *"I asked my brother's wife if she can give me R20 pocket money so I could go to the meeting on Saturday. Then she asked me to bake scones for her friend. I just said 'yes' and I was thinking that I should have said 'no' because I wanted to go to the meeting and I couldn't go."*

Alice also shares *"One of my neighbours came to borrow R500 for the funeral of her daughter. My husband came to me to talk about it and I was not sure of myself because I didn't want to give them my money. I wanted to say 'no' but I felt guilty and I gave it to them."*

Caroline talks *"When my sister-in-law asked me for my last pack of chicken pieces I gave it to her because I couldn't say 'no'. Then I didn't have food and my family suffered at the end."*

Everyone tells the group about how they give in. They share that when they show weakness they are hurt and upset about giving up control to someone else. They see that they are not assertive enough to establish their own needs and wants. Their stories show their lack of confidence in themselves.

Their stories are placed into the context of not expressing what they really need to say to the person. Why can they not say 'no'? They just give in. In summary I tell them that their stories are stories about being abused.

Not one of them feels good. In each of their stories they do not credit that they are being abused. Abuse is another new concept about themselves that they have to think about. Most of them think that they have to be physically abused but never think that they are being abused in psychological and emotional ways.

They give away money, curtains and chicken pieces and they suffer. I ask them if they would feel better if they refused to obey the wishes of the other. They all agree that they would but they do not know how to refuse.

Being assertive is a brand new kind of behaviour and they do not know how effective it can become in remodeling themselves and their relationships.

I promise them that by the end of this module they will not be the same persons again. They will wrestle with their own personal

demons and will learn to confront people of whom they are afraid. Through practicing and putting their role plays into effect they will change their situations and gain people's respect. By being assertive, they will never provide wood for their abuser's fire.

Days pass. Time limits stretch and shorten. Lessons change. A ten minute exercise becomes forty minutes and an hour exercise becomes thirty minutes. When I increase time limits I have to cut back on time for other exercises. The exercises give us the opportunity to look at which are the areas they need to improve and which are the most important areas in their personal lives on which they have to work.

We use several written handouts for this module and they read them in rotation. I always confirm with them if they understand before I press on. I give them a handout to read that explains five major reasons why woman do not assert themselves. They read that a woman may not know how to behave in an assertive way. She may be afraid to assert herself. From fear she may talk herself out of expressing her own feelings that she has a right to feel. She may not know what to say or how to say it.

They look forward to seeing which of the scenarios are similar to their own. They write down lists of the people who have the most influence on them. Perhaps someone for whom they work, their parents, husbands and family or their friends. Then they have to remember a time when they interacted with them. Did they 'lose' the argument and become angry or withdraw? I ask them to form groups of three and talk to their friends about what has happened to them.

Their voices rise as they begin to share stories. Walking around the room I listen quietly and briefly to each of the groups. I hear how they pretend that the situation is not happening to them or they apologise too much. After their sharing, some of their stories are funny and we all have a good laugh.

Ntombi shares. *"Every day before I leave home I tell my kids to pack up their things in the right place. Sometimes I shout at them. This morning I said to my son in a soft voice 'Pack up your things and put them in your room'. He looks at me and then I ask him 'Why do you look at me like this?' and he says 'Because you not shouting this time. What happened?' I just laugh and go away and they start to do the packing."*

They read handouts about abused people who stay quiet, cry, escape by over eating, sleeping too much, drinking too much or taking medication or drugs. These consequences are caused by their unhappiness and being caught under the manipulative spell of an unrelenting abuser.

We are surprised that the first week passes quickly. In the short space of five days they have learnt so much. They are seeing how they have been abused and they are learning how to stop the abuse. Their confidence is growing.

In our second week they have to put their knowledge into practice. They enact their most personal role plays where the group gives them feedback from a printed questionnaire. I suggest that they take an easy person to deal with until they have refined their assertiveness skills and their approach. Their husbands are probably the most difficult to respond to, but some of them want to 'face' them in their role plays.

Before they can act out their role play they must write down what they want to say. They have to say how they feel about what is happening and what they would like to change. I stress that they must respect and stick to their statement. If it is not direct and specific their interaction will fail. If they say too much their message will get lost.

As important as verbal behaviour is, non-verbal behaviour is also extremely important. The group has to judge if the person is being sarcastic, whining or pleading. Is she sure of herself? Does her voice move down at the end of each sentence or does it rise up in a whine? Does she use a series of excuses in her opening statement? Is she showing nervous gestures during the interaction?

Then they must acknowledge why the person is abusive toward them. They do not really know. So they use the words 'probably' or 'possibly' because they can only assume why they're being abused. They must then repeat what they first wanted to happen.

When they are finished with the interaction they leave the person's presence. They must not stay and take the bait of their abuser's irrelevant logic, manipulative or argumentative comments. If they do, they will become weak and get caught up in an argument. They will certainly lose their power and reap the consequences.

The women all help each other to manifest a clear statement. They say as my Khayelitsha group said, 'Don't be kind be honest!' They are ready to be honest, because they know how important these role plays are for each one of them in turn.

They happily give feedback if the person is firm and confident. But if not, and she shows aggressive or weak behaviour then she has to start again - and maybe again and again until she gets it right - or gets it more or less right. They regularly clap for the person.

All of this is a great deal to remember and more difficult to conduct. Trying out new behaviour makes them feel great anxiety and some of them will laugh or break down. We also laugh sometimes. But practicing in front of the class is helpful. To improve in technique and personal strength they have to follow the questionnaire feedback from the group and this is the most crucial guidance they can get.

They are asked to go home and carry out the interactions assertively with their abusers. It is important to tell them that these interactions are difficult and they will not change things much during their first contact. They can repeat the interactions again and again when they need to. After repeating them they will see how they improve and they will lose their fear.

We cannot wait for their stories during the go-around the following morning. Some completed their interactions. Some say that the person was not available to interact with. We clap and praise those who are successful in their interactions as they recount how they complete a very difficult task. It shows them that they can learn to be assertive. It is not impossible. There is a wonderful air of encouragement in the room.

Dawn relates *"Usually when I get home from class and my house is untidy then I go all haywire and I scold at the children. Yesterday when I got home all tired and feeling ill the house was in a shambles again. I told the children calmly and explained when I get back from the shop I want the house tidied. When I got back it looked a bit better though not to my satisfaction. Then one of my sons complained that I didn't get him something that he wanted me to buy and I called them all together and made them sit down. I explained our financial situation and calmly told them that I need them to be there for me. I can't afford to buy them all that they need. I think now they understand and I am feeling better."*

Sheilla is happy to share her story. *“I spoke to my brother about when he always keeps on asking me to serve him tea. I told him that I get upset. Then I said he is possibly angry because he is my older brother and he feels that I don’t respect him and I have always had to make his tea for years. But I also said it upsets me and he must understand that he also needs to do things for himself. He was quiet when I finished.”*

Noxolo tell us about the relationship that she has with her boyfriend. *“My boyfriend used to come late at home and I always got angry at him and shouted at him. Yesterday I just quietly talked to him and told him that I don’t like what he is doing. He explained to me and I understood well.”*

Jean shares and we laugh along with her *“Last week my husband asked me about this course I am doing. I told him that I am going to help abused women. I told him that I am going to start here in this house to be a social worker. Then I am thinking ‘What is going on with me?’ The assertiveness behavior is working! Now I can see the change.”*

Bertha tells us *“I always get into a fight with my son when he wants to eat so much. Yesterday he came and asked if he can open a tin of baked beans. I never answered and I just looked at him. I never said a word and he took that as a ‘no’. So I became assertive.”*

Sometimes they get things a bit wrong and we see it as being funny. With Bertha’s story we speak about how she was Passive Aggressive and how she can respond Assertively. Every day there are useful stories and experiences to learn from.

They are able to make their voices heard and their anxiety becomes less and they begin to relax. The more they practice, the less nervous they feel. All through the following modules they will continue to become more assertive within themselves. It takes time.

Finally at the end of our module we all participate in a role play repeated four times, when they use the four different kinds of behaviour. In each of the scenarios the husband behaves aggressively and the wife reacts either Aggressively, Non-Aggressively, Non-Assertively or Assertively. In each of the first three scenarios she cannot win. Everyone can see that the housewife’s behaviour does not stop the abuse.

When she behaves assertively she is not afraid and he notices that she has not behaved like this before. She does not give him ‘fuel for

his fire'. He eventually runs out of words. Then he turns around, swears and angrily leaves her. This time he has not won.

The group thinks that it is a deception, and that it does not really work. Only when they participate in the role of the husband do they realise that they cannot interact abusively with a woman who is so sure and assertive. They learn that abusers are bullies. He cannot attack her when she is strong and assertive.

Journal July 1995

"Another thing happened this last week. I got a call from a woman who administers a Trust Foundation and she said that they are having another meeting of the trustees this Friday. The trustees were asking about Mosaic and wanted to know what I was doing. She questioned me and she asked me to put my answers into a letter for the trustees. I did this and delivered it on Friday. It was an amazing call to get and to think that they came back to ME! I obviously don't know if they will support Mosaic but at least they called and showed that they were interested."

Every morning for two weeks, we have our go-arounds before we begin class. They state how they feel when they are 'fired' with criticisms by their partners and how they can now respond to them appropriately.

Evaluation forms are filled in everyday and they write down their comments for me to read. I can usually assess who knows what we are doing and who is just coasting by.

During the module I have to focus my attention and I cannot waiver for a moment. The general nervousness in the group during the ten day's activities and the insecurities of all of them are taxing on me. This is a daunting module.

To lighten the pace and the mood I build in a short visualisation and meditation into the end of today's lessons. In this way I restore balance for them and for myself and we all cool off. Thank heavens its Friday and the last of this module.

When I get home I am tired, tired, tired. I dump my briefcase in the office and head upstairs to put my feet up and have a cup of coffee. However, I am happy that it is the end of this second module.

The group's general improvement is impressive. Even Lulu manages to interact assertively and is so proud of herself.

Now we are ready to move onto the third module called Understanding Woman's Issues.

Womandla – Women Power!

This module on Understanding Women's Issues develops their understanding of the history of the black women's position in the South African society. The coloured population was also considered non-white and was treated in similar ways to the black community. However, coloured women did not have to carry passes. It was also illegal for coloured people to inter-marry with whites.

There are a number of articles and Handouts to read in class. We read how sex and gender are different. Sex refers to the biological differences between men and women. Gender is not in-born, it is a system where men and women are socialised into rigid gender roles that they are expected to play. Women are the frequent victims of this system and men usually benefit from it. Gender refers to the unequal treatment that men and women receive in society. I explain how patriarchy means the 'law of the father' and it goes even further to extend to an entire system where men have the power and women are disempowered.

Those of the married women in the group understand what they have to experience as mothers of sons, and wives of their dominating husbands and families. Sheilla's relationship with her brother is a prime example of men's power over women, and women who give into that power.

We have group discussions about their understanding of the Triple Oppression of gender, race and class. The Triple Oppression is crucially important for them. They relate to it immediately.

They know that as black women the triple oppression intersects to place them in the most disadvantaged positions in our society. They are at the bottom of the social and economic ladder. Alice keeps on referring to the triple oppression and what it has done to black women. For all of them in the classroom it is a revelation. The way they have been treated has a 'name'. They have been oppressed in three significant ways.

In the week-long module we discuss the feminist analysis of women's oppression and gender inequality. They read that the struggle for gender equality is a struggle for both men and women. The control of economic wealth in this country is still by whites and the majority of workers are black. Men and women who are not 'white' have to struggle to change this scenario. In the black community they are mostly menial labourers. Abuse of domestic workers is common. They read how we have to acknowledge that there are white middle class women who are also oppressed, but they have the advantage and privilege of their race and class position.

Because this module affects them personally, they read the articles and Handouts with great interest. We talk about the socialisation of boys and girls. We talk about the clothes babies wear and the toys that they play with. They agree that girls can be weak and cry and boys have to be strong and brave. We discuss how in their culture and in their homes, there are different roles that boys and men, girls and women, play in family life. Girls have to cook and wash up and the boys are humiliated if asked to help. When Caroline asks her son to help with the washing up he tells her that it isn't his job and walks out.

In some communities boys are regarded as more important than girls. Boys have more access to an education which leads to better jobs. Lulu's brothers were given an education and she resents this because she was denied it. Women who have sons before marriage realise that their sons do not hold any positions of power. Jean relates to this.

We read articles on women's struggles in South Africa and how women are empowered. We read how women are now chanting that 'Enough is Enough' and 'Stop Violence Against Women'. Women are staging marches to reclaim the safety of women, and especially in the streets at night.

We read about the political prisoner Walter Sisulu's wife Albertina and how she and women of different races gathered 20,000 other women to walk to protest pass laws for black women. On 9th August 1956 these courageous women march together to President Strydom's office in Pretoria to present him with forms of protest regarding pass laws for black women. The police ban the march.

Strydom's office is locked. The women chant 'Strydom, you strike the woman, you strike the rock - Watint' abafazi, watint' imbokodo'. It is uplifting for the group to read about women of all colours who stand together united.

Hilda shares with us that *"As we live in this male dominated society with a culture which doesn't allow women to be decision makers, this module proves that women are leaders also. Women need other women to support them and also help other women to know their rights and be encouraged"*

Alice shares her thoughts *"What encourages me now is that I have learnt a lot about different skills which show me the way I was abused by culture and society. The Triple Oppression is very interesting. I particularly learnt about how I was socialised by our community. It makes me think of when I was working in the textile factory when there was apartheid with some staff members. Some of the coloureds didn't want us to share the same washroom. Just because they were coloured and we were blacks they wanted their own loo. But it was solved. I learnt a lot in this module."*

I can see them strengthen and be reinforced with new understanding. They believe that African women are weak and powerless but in reality they realise that they have the power to change their positions in society. At the end of the week everyone is much wiser and much more confident. They understand all the issues that impinge on their positions as black women and it all makes sense to them. Women empowerment does so much for their self-esteem. It is fascinating for me to learn about them.

Jean timidly reveals *"It was quite difficult to talk at the beginning about personal things because I didn't know anybody. I was worried about English and that the others will laugh at me. To be with different cultures and get to know each other, we can now understand each other. I didn't want anybody to know where I am staying. Is there anybody else who stays in a shack like me? By respecting and understanding each other and finding out that we are on the same level it is much easier to share."*

Noxolo shares *"It was difficult to participate because it was my first time in a group. I didn't know anyone from this group. I found myself too young to share my problems with old people who we respect because in my culture we don't do it and I never did it before. It was my first time to listen to old people's problems and then I found it interesting and as a result I opened up and I feel comfortable about it."*

Ntombi communicates *“I was worried how I shall fit in and will others accept me? We are different cultures and will we understand each other? Will I open myself to them and is there respect for each other? Now we have become close. We feel for each other and are dependent on each other. The support the group has given me. How we can cry when others in the group are sad, and they are just being there for me when I am down”*.

They are opening up to each other and feeling safe to share. It is encouraging and I am so proud that this is happening to grassroots and previously disenfranchised women.

Uncovering Woman Abuse

In this Module on Woman Abuse, the group comes to understand the different kinds of violence and the difficult abuse that women experience. They will understand that abuse is used by people who want power and control. They have to know how someone can be abused without realising that they are being abused. They will grow confident knowing everything about Woman Abuse, so that they can answer tricky questions from abusive men and give supportive answers to abused women.

One of the important issues that they learn is that women can abuse men. However, because most of the abuse is perpetrated by men, I tell my women that we shall talk about abusers as being men.

We begin the Module by talking about how women are abused by men in society. They look at the personality traits of abused women and of men who abuse. There is no 'type' of an abused women or 'type' of an abuser. Women from all cultures, with all levels of education, from all income groups and with many different types of personalities are abused. They also realise that there is no definition of an abuser's personality.

They learn that there are six kinds of ways that women can be abused: verbal, physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and economic. There are women who are abused among our group and who sit in our circle so I remind them to be sensitive when sharing stories about abuse.

When we talk about Verbal Abuse they say it is common behaviour in their communities. They relate to it personally. They become weak and hopeless when they are verbally abused or criticised. They discuss men who swear, shout and tell women that they are stupid or useless. They contribute stories of men who do not care as they shout or argue with their partners in the street outside their shacks or houses. Abused women are ashamed and feel stigmatised by the community and this is what their partners want to happen.

They talk about men who congregate together in shebeens or on street corners and who share ugly jokes about women. The men laugh loudly, belittle, criticise and make sexual remarks about women. Outside the shebeen near her house, Hilda tells us that she heard a man joke with his cronies that he must drink more beer so that he can go home and beat his wife. Hilda is shocked to hear this.

We talk of Physical Abuse which is common in their communities. Apart from hitting, kicking and hurting women physically they recount how abusers cause their death. They talk of how women are physically abused by being suffocated, and how men burn them or murder them. Men with firearms or knives use them on their wives or partners. Pregnant women are often kicked in their stomachs and lose their babies.

Bertha knows of a young woman who lived close to her and who was recently murdered outside her house. And in recent months we discuss how there are women who are constantly killed in the community by their partners. It seems that men get away with murder. Even if a life is taken, no one seems to care in the black or coloured communities. No one takes abuse seriously.

When I add children to the list, they say that children are often the victims of abusive crossfire. Children are helpless in trying to protect their mothers who are abused by their fathers.

Men constantly argue with children and often their intention is to break down their mother's spirit emotionally as she witnesses her children's fear and pain. Children often leave home because of the abuse from their fathers or their mother's boyfriends. Many of them are affected for their lifetime. Jean talks about her oldest son who was born from another partner before she got married. Her husband abuses him and he now stays with her mother who lives quite near to her. But she misses him.

Some children leave home and become involved with drugs and drug 'gangs' who become their families. Or they become street children. We talk about street children who we all see begging on the street corners. Where do they come from and what horror has taken place so that they choose to live abandoned on the streets and become susceptible to the dangers of rape and HIV all around them?

Under Sexual Abuse I tell them that forced intercourse by their husbands is rape. They are surprised because they do not know about this. They think that it is their husbands' right to have sex with them even if they do not want it to happen. They tell me that they have to be available for their husbands and if they are not, they will be in trouble. They will be abused, or their husbands will seek affairs and blame them for not giving him what he wants.

Caroline is brave as she tells us about the sexual affair that her husband is having with another woman. *"On the day that I did my interview with Mosaic I didn't have any money to go back home. I only had enough for a single ticket so I walked from town to Observatory where my husband was working, to get money from him. And it was that day that I found out that he was cheating on me, having an affair, because I saw that he was sitting and touching that girl. But for me I didn't take it seriously because I got this feeling with me that although I am not sure that I am going to be chosen for Mosaic but I had this feeling that I might. I just took the money he gave me and I went back to the taxi rank. Really I didn't worry. It only came later when things were coming to me that I knew 'No man, he is cheating. I saw it with my two eyes'. But really I thank God because I was busy thinking of Mosaic at that time."*

We support Caroline in her situation. I do not think that any of the women really trust their husbands. But finding out about it must be hard, especially with Caroline surprising her husband with another woman with whom he is being unfaithful.

Unexpectedly, another of our women tells us a sensitive and personal story of emotional and sexual abuse. She says that she recently walks into her bedroom and she is surprised to find her husband having sex with his mistress on their bed. She is shocked. We all think that she is shocked to see her husband with his mistress but she tells us that she is shocked because it is the first time she has seen his 'bum'.

When she says this it is so funny and for all of us it is a perfect time for a laugh. She laughs as well. On days like this humour is a necessity. We have compassion for our special woman in our class, and although the group laughs it is not a funny story. She has to live with the fact that her husband is unfaithful by having a mistress in her own house and having sex with her on her bed. She knows that he will not give her up.

Some men will refuse to have sex with their partners. I point out that this is also abuse. The women share stories with me about men who force their wives to have sex with their abuser's friends and they watch them being raped. They talk about men who will force their partner to watch him having sex with other women. They will force her into prostitution and take the money. The women in our group have the stories and the answers. I am shocked by what they share.

Then we discuss how many kinds of abuse are experienced in Rape. They tell me that it is an accumulation of all the different kinds of abuse. It is the most devastating act of abuse that can happen to a woman. It is an invasion of the woman's self that she might never recover from. Raped women need their help, support and their admiration for surviving the rape. Rape, battering and violence are private matters that women find difficult to talk about. The group has to know how to approach and talk to battered and abused women and to rape survivors.

Generally, men in our society are taught to view women as objects that they can have power over and control. It is an expression of 'patriarchal power'. Most women live in fear and expectation of being raped because of the society we live in. Many women are raped and sexually abused by their fathers, brothers, uncles, their mother's boyfriends or boarders staying in their homes.

It is hard for my group to recount how many thousands of women are raped and abused. They have been abused themselves and the telling of these stories drops the mood in the room. Today's topic is difficult. They have much to share, but it makes them angry when they talk about it and it is all depressing. Dawn who lived with her abusive husband knows about abuse. She is distressed by our conversation and underneath the distress and depression they all feel deep anger.

We talk about myths and I have to try and define a 'myth'. Myths are false stories that are repeated over many generations until people believe them to be true. Believing myths can do much damage, especially to abused women who believe them. We list the different myths and we discuss them.

Many people believe in the myth that drink causes men to become abusive. Abused women blame the 'drink' for their partner's

behaviour. I point out that when men are drunk they do not abuse their friends who they are drinking with, or the Shebeen Queens who are the owners of the taverns. They do not abuse people on the streets. They know exactly who they are going to abuse and go home and beat their partners. Also this is a myth because not every man who drinks will abuse. Many men drink and it does not make them aggressive and violent. Drink may loosen their conscious behaviour but drink does not cause abusive behaviour. The abusers know exactly what they are doing.

A dangerous myth is when a woman believes her partner abuses her because his father was abusive towards him. Some men who are abused in their youth do not abuse their partners in return. Many abusive men come from families that are not violent. Many women will not blame their abuser and will say 'he cannot help it'. He certainly 'can help it' and he can stop being abusive if he wants to.

Abused women will tell people that they love their partners even if they abuse them. Abusers will tell their partners that they hit them because they love them. We say that hurting someone is not 'loving' someone.

My group believes that many women who are abused have low self-esteem. They are fearful that they will be punished if they do not listen to their abusers. I point out that not only non-assertive women are abused. Strong, assertive and educated women are also emotionally and psychologically abused by their partners. Fear of what the abuser can do to them keeps the abuse in place.

My group are surprised to hear that white, educated and powerful women are abused. They have to remember that abuse is used for power and control. Sometimes when women become powerful and successful their partners will abuse them to bring them down 'to size'. There are wealthy women who do not leave their abusive partners because of their financially comfortable lives. Staying in the relationship is often to their detriment and to their children's detriment as well. They are frightened of their partners turning violent. They fear going through a messy divorce, with the children used as pawns. These fears keep them in their scary relationships.

The myth that abused woman will always be an abused woman is not true. They may reach a point where they choose not to have an

abusive partner. They may want to stay on their own. They will make more informed choices.

At the end of this session we recount how myths are damaging and dangerous. Today is an 'eye opener' and it explains women's positions more clearly. It explains how abusive partners are treating many of their friends and family. Now they will not blame women for 'nagging' their husbands. They will blame the men who do not listen to or have no empathy for their partners. Now my community women have compassion and more of an open mind to women who are abused.

We then go on to talk about the difference between Emotional Abuse which has to do with feelings and Psychological Abuse which has to do with thoughts.

Alice talks about emotional abuse when she constantly kept looking for her father. *"As a small child I never knew who my father was and I would hang onto the gate and look out at the people passing by. I would wonder if any of the men that I saw was my father. My mother wouldn't tell me. My friends had fathers. It was painful not having a father. I felt I was neglected as a small child. Now I know it was emotional abuse. It was difficult."*

She is also emotionally abused by the male members of her church. She gets upset when she is treated without respect as a committee member. *"I was also active in my church committee. But because I was a woman they did not take me seriously and they would decide matters for me without my consent. It made me angry and it still makes me angry."*

Jean talks about the difficult emotional relationship that she has with her mother and the heartbreak it causes her with her child. She feels that her mother emotionally abuses her. *"My child was sick with boils and a heart problem but I didn't know my child had a heart problem. When my child got sick at night my mother would just put off the lights and say 'Sisi, I am working tomorrow morning so I don't want to have light in my house at night.' I would put my child on my chest crying. My sisters were there for me. They were all working so one would bring me milk sometimes and they'd ask me what I am short of. They liked my child but my mother didn't like him and she didn't give me anything for my child. Life was hard and I felt that my mother didn't care about me and my child. My mother never asked if there was anything wrong. When my sisters asked me what is wrong with my child my mother looked the other way. It was hurtful. My sister gave me money to go to Red Cross Hospital."*

I took him and then the doctor's told me he had a hole in his heart. My mother was not there for me, only my sisters."

Lulu quietly shares her story about being emotionally and psychologically abused by her father and later by her husband. *"When I was 17 years old my father told me that I have to get married. He told me that they were already in the process of Lobola. I didn't know the man that I was going to get married to. On the wedding day I was shocked when I saw that he couldn't write, he couldn't sign and he just put an X for his name. I started crying because I didn't know that I was going to be married to a person who doesn't even know how to write his name. Oh, I was miserable. It was so difficult because my father arranged the marriage. There was no other way. After my mother's death I was crying and I was so unhappy. I couldn't sleep at night. There was no-one for me when my mother passed away from a stroke. Yo! It was hard. I was a domestic worker right up until I applied to Mosaic."*

The coloured women in the class say that jealousy and abuse happen a lot in their communities. They also talk about gossiping and the fear abused women have about being talked about in their community.

Psychological Abuse is playing mind games that threaten women's mental health. They talk about men who threaten women and say "You wait until I get home and then I will deal with you". Then the women really feel anxious and worried the whole day. Even if they are at work, all they can think about is the threat of abuse that they will experience that evening. This apparently happens quite often in the coloured community.

Dawn talks about women who are forcibly admitted into the psychiatric hospital in Mitchells Plain by their husbands. Their husbands threaten them as 'being mad' and book them into the mental hospital. In hospital they are drugged. The women really begin to think that they are mad.

Abused women are isolated from family or friends. Their partners will accuse the family of influencing them or saying things that he does not like. She has to cut ties with her family and friends. This further opens her to his abuse. Sometimes the family tells the women to 'go back home' because they have made the choice to live with their abusers. The family also do not want to return the Lobola to the abuser.

Isolated, they will definitely fall. If our community workers can empower their clients and help them to reconnect with family and friends they will most possibly be supported by them. Their clients need someone who really understands them and who can help them survive.

Living in South Africa before our democratic elections our Black women had to carry 'pass books' with their pictures in them, and produce them for the police at any time. The women say that this was continual emotional abuse. They could not move from the place where they were born to live or visit other parts of the country.

Hilda tells us about her emotional and physical transition from living as a Black woman to taking on the persona of a Coloured woman when she arrives from Port Elizabeth. *"I wasn't supposed to be in Cape Town without a pass. That time when my friend and I came to Cape Town there were pass laws for black people. I wasn't supposed to work in Cape Town because I wasn't born in Cape Town. Then it was such a struggle, I had to change my identity and act as a coloured woman who didn't have to have passes. My whole lifestyle had to change. The way I walked. The way I dressed. It was such a big thing even today when I think about it and I say to myself I don't feel good about it because I had to live lies. You know. I had to lie. I had to pretend as if I was someone I am not. And because of the pass laws when the police van came I would speak Afrikaans as if I was a coloured lady. It was very difficult really. I also had to change my name A friend of mine gave me references of Linda Jantjies. I don't know what happened to that Linda Jantjies. Then I was using those references and I got the job as a domestic worker because of those references."*

The women laugh about Linda Jantjies when Hilda tells us her story. It is all too real for them. They know how the police patrolled their townships and the streets of our cities. It has been an everyday occurrence with the police asking them for their pass books. We all remember when Jean told us that as a child she wanted to be a police woman so she could save herself and her family.

Today as we all sit safely together in class we can find some humour in Hilda Mtshazi's transformation into Linda Jantjies. It reminds us sharply that we are still close to that trauma. I am painfully aware that the movement of these wonderful women in front of me was constantly monitored, restricted and punished last year. The

predicament that Hilda found herself in was one that they relate to and identify powerfully with now.

The Apartheid regime was cruel and relentless. The rules and regulations still affect everyone and exist in the minds of people. We are grateful that our democracy has now taken place and my black women are free citizens of our country. I was not a part of all this humiliation, fear and suffering. I feel the white guilt rise in me and I realise that I am the luckiest woman in the world to be embraced and accepted by these forgiving women.

Hilda's story affects and moves us all. The mood shifts from humour to remembered pain and I feel a wave of emotion growing in the room. Although I want to explore how they all survived, I do not want to get into that area of discussion yet. Today I just want them to share something of their abuse with us all.

Hilda shares her story about her economic abuse and abuse by her family. *"Things were so difficult when I was young. I disgraced my family by being pregnant out of wedlock. It was something disgraceful. I never felt good about it but I never had an option. After that I started working as a domestic worker at that tender age because I had to go and work for my child. I was 17 and just turning 18. I struggled, working so hard as a domestic worker and I didn't like what I was doing. I didn't even receive much money. I knew that there was something or someplace better where I was supposed to be but it never happened that way."*

We discuss threatening, stalking and harassment which are Psychological abuse. The women talk about men who follow their partners to their jobs and wait for them outside or follow them and 'spy' on them. They suffer with constant thoughts that they are threatened and harassed and in harm's way. We all discuss how awful it must be to live with a stalker and a threatening abuser. They can never feel free.

Economic Abuse is not an abuse that they are familiar with. However, when I ask if they have been refused money by their partners a number of them say 'yes'. Partners do not give them money or they take their money that they have worked for. When they are in a temper, they break and destroy things the women buy for themselves, or they will sell things with or without their knowledge.

Then there is the constant struggle to get money for their children as Hilda expressed in her story. Men do not pay maintenance and do not give money to the mother for their children. The group knows women who are pregnant and have illegal abortions because the men abandon them before the children are born and they cannot afford to keep them.

Jean from our group shares how her husband economically abuses her by not giving her money that she needed for her child. *"I was married but my husband wouldn't give me any money. When I took my baby to the doctor he said I must see a Social Worker. But I was scared because I thought that they would arrest my husband because I didn't know what a social worker was. I ran away. I couldn't stay at home. Until one woman gave me a job for two days a week in Sea Point. I put my sick baby on my back walking up and down the mountain to work. It was so hard for me".*

Alice tells us that she is happy to know about economic abuse. She still lives painfully through the memories of the economic abuse that she experienced as an adult factory worker. *"As an adult I worked in a factory as a machine operator. I worked hard for long hours and earned very little money because I was black. I used to spend my money from hand to mouth with nothing in the bank for me or for my children. Because I had no skills and no education, I had to work hard. I see this as economic abuse."*

This is the first time that they are analysing abuse and applying it to their lives. They are going to have to teach their clients about abuse in their counselling sessions, in their workshops and when they educate people about abuse in their public presentations.

After sharing all the things that happen in an abusive relationship, we remain quiet. Then I ask them seriously how many of them have been abused by their partners in any of the above ways? They mostly nod their heads. Some of them have tears in their eyes from stories that we have shared. I am aware that they are all in pain.

Then Rina struggles to control her tears and her arms are crossed tightly across her chest as she shares her story with us. From her original interview I know that she is an abused woman. Today because of what we are discussing she starts talking to us. Her voice is soft and hesitant. *"My mother is very abusive to me and she has abused me my whole life. She causes me lots of pain and hurt. She won't tell me who my father is even though she knows who he is. My mother shouts and screams at me*

when I ask her to tell me his name. Other members of my family know who he is. I keep on asking who he is and they won't tell me. This is very painful for me because I know that he is alive and they know who he is. I need a father's love because my mother hates me and I don't know why. I have lived with this pain forever. It hurts me to see my friends with mothers and fathers. I have never known my mother's love or my father's love. Adding to my pain is my younger daughter who has leukaemia and she is very sick. My mother also abuses her. Perhaps, because she is my child. My heart breaks when she does this. I really want to like my mother but I can't because she won't let me."

Her tears run down her cheeks and she is completely immobilised. In a totally combined and supportive way the women give her the time and loving compassion that she needs. Some of our women are very tearful and upset. They probably relate to Rina's story about family abuse and how they are also treated by their parents and partners. Alice certainly knows. Her story is similar to Rina's story.

We encourage Rina to be assertive with her mother and tell her how she feels. In an assertive way we practice with her. We help her to say what she needs to say. We patiently allow her to replay her interaction with her mother and we encourage her to do it this week while it is still fresh in her mind.

Then Caroline says *"Every night when my husband returns from work I have to get water and wash his dirty feet. I hate doing this. I have decided that I shall not wash his feet again. I have to work out what I can say to him and stand up for myself."*

The women encourage Caroline to talk assertively to her husband and ask her to report back to us.

It has been a heavy day for us as most women share their stories and we are all affected by them. These are emotionally laden memories.

For the next few days we practice assertiveness interactions. Each of them has to think about people who they have difficulty in being assertive with. In class they take real situations and practice them. They have to identify who they are interacting with and what they need to say. It takes time and thought.

Then they role play the interactions for all of us in the class. Each role play has to be repeated over until the person feels comfortable

with what they have to say to their abusers. We look at their body language, confidence and control. When someone isn't confident we point it out and they have to repeat the interaction.

Today is Friday. In the go-around Rina wants to share her news. She had an Assertiveness Interaction with her mother. Rina role plays what happens. She says that she was scared but she went to her mother's house. With her mother in front of her she remembered what she needed to say and do. She told her mother that from now on she wants her out of her life. She told her that she feels she has buried half of herself with her mother carrying around all the pain for all these years. Now she can leave this pain behind. She tells us that her mother was swearing abuse at her when she left. But she just closed the door and walked away.

Afterwards, she cannot believe that she did that after all these years of holding the pain inside her. She feels so relieved and proud of how she stood up for herself. She hugs me and hugs the women and thanks us. She says that she could never have done this without all of our help. The women laugh and praise her for her courage.

Caroline says that she told her husband that she is not his slave and she is never going to wash his feet again. He was angry with her. He knows where it is coming from, it is coming from the training course. But Caroline feels so relieved and now she is not so afraid of her husband. She also knows about his affair so he does not really have any authority over her. She knows she can be assertive when she needs to say something to him.

We are excited. The support of all the women in our group is an example of their growth and the astonishing bond that has formed during a very short time.

Journal August 1995

"I called psychic Suzi when I got home and asked her to please come over to me. I asked her to spiritually read the handwriting on the trainee's evaluation forms. When she got to Rina's form she put her hand over Rina's handwriting. Then she said that she feels heartbroken because of all the pain that she feels for Rina. I told her about her interaction with her mother and how proud we were of her. Suzi said that she doesn't think Rina will finish the course. She may have

done the interaction but she is drowning in pain. It is something for me to think about.

It is a powerful module and it is addressing very real issues. Memories are released spontaneously and have to be contained. It is like one big emotional lava-flow. Just about all of them have been abused in their pasts and so have their children. Very traumatic issues are coming into the circle. I find that I am constantly trying to maintain a balance between following the lesson plans and finding space and resources to discuss personal and painful issues. Some days I feel that it is too much."

Today we have a visitor in class from an organisation that counsels, supports and shelters drug abusers. She calls me this week and asks if she can talk to our community workers. Our group doesn't know much about drugs or her organisation and it will be very useful for them to know that we can refer clients or their client's children who are drug abusers to her. She stands at the 'top' of the circle near the door and everyone is seated around the room. During her talk she gives us a lot of information about drugs and drug users and asks our community workers questions. They find it interesting and they answer her. Then she points a particular question towards Lulu who sits at the opposite end of the room and we are sure that she will not hear Lulu's answer. We think that she will speak in her weak little voice. We all look at Lulu.

Lo and behold we are flabbergasted. A huge booming voice emanates from Lulu. What? Lulu has a voice? To our visitor's surprise we all pack up laughing and Lulu does too. Lulu is astonished and giggles into her breasts. Then we explain to our visitor that Lulu has not spoken out loudly before now. Her voice has been weak and soft. Today Lulu finds her voice. We are all so excited for her. Now she sounds like an empowered woman.

During the week we do an exercise about what in their background contributes to making them the people they are today. The exercise takes off in a completely different direction. They talk about their childhood abuse from families and later abuse from partners and husbands. They talk about experiencing neglect, abuse, rape and abandonment. Two of our women go to pieces and catch

me completely off-guard. I cannot believe what is happening. Virtually every woman in the group is now in tears.

We have to calm ourselves down and bring peace back into the room. We look at the life-lessons that we have learnt. Without these lessons we would not be doing this training and we would not be able to help abused women. The lessons have made us stronger. At the end of our discussion they all seem calmer.

In 1995 there is no one who really talks about abuse. It certainly is not shared openly and publicly in the black townships. The personal disgrace and the stigma and shame are too great. Abuse is a dark, dangerous and private world not to be entered into by outsiders. My group are brave women who want to be caught up in healing themselves and their abused clients. They are learning about and digging up deeply hurtful experiences that have been ignored or that they have been unaware of before today.

We break for lunch and some of them go out onto the small balcony to take in the fresh air and share their sandwiches. The others go across the road to the pie shop to buy their lunch. It is a very necessary time to catch our breath. We all need to breath.

I put a copy of the Power and Control Wheel on the wall. On my fact finding tour in 1993 I am given a copy of this wheel designed by the Domestic Violence Intervention Project in Minnesota, USA. It is an inclusive wheel including Power and Control placed in the center of the wheel and the different spokes of the wheel contain kinds of abuse which fan out around the centre. The abuse that we spoke about because of power and control earlier in this module are included in the diagram. However, there are more inclusions about 'abusive behavior' such as intimidation, isolation, coercion and threats. These are difficult English words and the group wants me to explain them.

When we refer to the wheel they want to know what 'coercion' means. I tell them that it is a type of abuse where you feel that you are being persuaded or manipulated by someone to do something that you do not want to do. If you do not do it, you feel that you will let the person down and you will feel guilty and maybe even blamed. It is like being intentionally persuaded by someone to act against your wishes.

We discuss how manipulation is also a means of coercing someone into doing things that they do not want to do. They know what it feels like and they share their personal stories. During these sessions everyone is mindful and respectful of the speaker.

Before we end class I take them through a short visualisation to relax them before going home. They are asked to close their eyes and sit quietly. Breathing quietly in and out, I ask them to think of a time when they felt strong and powerful. Their age doesn't matter. Can they picture where they are and what they are doing? Are they happy and relaxed where they visualise themselves to be? I ask them to remember the feeling, and to enjoy it. After a few minutes I ask them to keep those feelings within them for the rest of the day and the rest of the week.

When they open their eyes, they say how good they feel and how much their positive thoughts about themselves mean to them. We break for a final go-around and then they leave to go home. We are all tired.

Journal September 1995

"I try to hide it from the women but there's no way of stopping what's happening to me now. I just feel worried and stressed all the time. It is been like this for the past few weeks. My patience and my energy are drying up. I have this constant subliminal anxiety upsetting my balance. Again I am at some point where lots of things are on my mind, on many levels, and I can't think clearly. I am not my usual resourceful self. I am trying to bolster twelve women and deal with group dynamics all by myself".

The following day starts off with our morning go-around. They tell me that it is quite unsettling to learn about how they have been abused. There is a lot to think about when remembering everything that happened during the lessons. However they say that they feel a bit better than they did the day before. They are more aware of how people have abused them. They did not know that shouting and being manipulated was being abusive. They just thought that the person was being rude.

I praise them for their courage to come back to class. I know it is not easy. I share how difficult it is for me as well. It is difficult to

listen to their painful stories, wanting to help them but having to press on with their training.

They are told that today we are going to look at the Cycle of Violence which is different from the Power and Control Wheel. The Cycle of Violence was developed by Dr Lenore Walker and is about the stages that the abusive relationship goes through. When we look at the Cycle of Violence they see that there are three stages which lead from one to the other and back again. They move around in a circle or 'cycle' but eventually one of the stages disappears and the abuse intensifies.

The first stage is the Honeymoon Stage. I ask the women how they feel when they first meet their boyfriends. With lots of nervous laughter their stories roll forth. I then ask them how they feel when they kiss their boyfriends for the first time. In the brief silence that follows Jean calls out loudly 'I feel juicy!' Everyone falls about laughing.

They talk about the pictures of their boyfriends that they carried, and how they glowingly told their girlfriends about their new love. They are giggly. It is exciting for them to remember.

They say that their boyfriends spoil them during the Honeymoon Stage and they tell stories about love and care and how they buy them gifts. They share how they hold hands in public, kiss in the streets and how comfortable it is when the boys put their arms around them. They love flirting with their boyfriends. The women feel important in this stage. They say that in this stage they feel the sunshine, love, excitement and happiness.

The second phase is the Tension Build-Up Stage. After a while things become more difficult in the relationship and it is not easy. The abusers engage in the next stage which is the beginning of the blame and punishment cycle. In this Tension Build-Up Stage the abusers become difficult and they lose all pretense of who they portrayed themselves to be in the Honeymoon Stage. They become different people and they change a lot. They begin to become their 'real abusive selves'. It is an uncertain period and not comfortable because the men will verbally, physically or emotionally become abusive towards them in small ways. The women will try to please their men and keep the peace because they love them and do not

want to lose their relationship. The Tension Stage builds up. The small ways in which women are abused are painful. The women talk about abused women who persuade themselves that their men still love them. Love is a bewildering word. They make excuses for them.

Then the group talks about some of the nice and kind things that men do and not the hurtful things. This stage really confuses the women. But in class we discuss and realise that men want the power and control during this period so they give mixed messages to their women. Everyone in class feels uneasy with the Tension Build-Up.

This now leads into the third stage of the Cycle of Violence, the Abuse or Violent Stage. In this stage the abuser is definitely no longer on his best behaviour. The women see that their men are violent and are no longer restrained. It is very difficult for women to talk about what happens to them during this stage. The abusers will hurt them and usually where it cannot be seen. They will kick their stomachs, burn them and pull their hair. If women get black eyes they are ashamed to say they have been hit but will say that they hurt themselves on a door or they fell off the pavement. They become the focus of their abusive partner's anger and violence. It can last for weeks or months.

The tension in our room increases when we talk about this stage as they know about what occurs. It may be an explosion triggered by something that happens inside or outside the home. It may relate to the men drinking alcohol or drugging with their friends and the men arriving home hopelessly drunk or drugged and looking for a fight, or the men become jealous of their women in public and attack them and accuse them of flirting.

It may start without any reason – and this is very scary because women do not know why they are being abused. They do not know why their men lose control of their behaviour. The only thing that they know is that their men turn on them and they are the prime focus of their violence. The women all agree that it is very frightening to live that kind of life with an abusive partner.

We discuss how abusers are people with low self-esteem. They think that the only way they can feel better is if they make their partner feel worse than they do. It is like a see-saw ride. When he is 'up' then the partner has to be 'down'. When the partner feels better

and is on the 'up' then he needs to abuse her to break her self-esteem and put her 'down'. Life with an abuser is an endless physical and emotional see-saw ride.

They are surprised when I point out that towards the end of the Abuse Stage women gain some sort of control over the men. Their abusers do not want to lose their women because they will lose an intimate partner over whom they have power and control. However when the women are beaten and bruised, some men may feel some kind of remorse and want to 'make it up' to her again. After he has abused her he will apologise for his behaviour.

Then it is back to the Honeymoon Stage once more. The abusers will ask their women to forgive them. They become affectionate. They will say that they love them and it will never happen again. They may once again shower their women with gifts and become caring and useful by doing things for them. The women believe that the abusers really mean what they are saying and that they have changed. They may start to feel love for them again and feel more relaxed. The Honeymoon Stage is a relief for them. The women do not know it, but this stage can last for days, weeks or months.

Unfortunately it gets to a point when the abuse is so great that the Honeymoon Stage disappears and the Tension and Violent Stages run rampant. Then there is just abuse and violence. Unfortunately sometimes after years of abuse the women will think that it is too late to change and that they will be abused forever.

I remind them that abusers are bullies and cowards. They like to be 'top dogs' but if they are threatened or exposed they may cut back or stop the abuse. Then they will abuse in different ways that the women cannot put their fingers on. It becomes subtle emotional or psychological abuse.

They all sit quietly and I realise that we have to break the mood in the class. We are all disheartened. I have to get them up off their seats to become energised. They need to be released from the sad atmosphere in class.

I tell them to stand up. Then to jump. Jump up and down. Jump to the right side and to left side. Hop. Hop on one foot and then hop on the other. Shake their hands till they come off their arms. Shake their legs. Reach up to the ceiling and then touch the floor. Stretch

and touch the sides of the room and then turn and stretch to touch the other sides. Then jump again. By this stage everyone is falling into each other, complaining as I shout Jump, Shake, Touch the floor and Hop. Jump, jump. Sheilla cannot touch the floor or jump. She is too big. They all laugh heartily at Sheilla and she bursts out with laughter as well. Others also cannot touch the floor. They are unfit and their big tummies are in their way. They are all laughing until they cannot laugh or stand up any longer. It is a wonderful exercise and we are going to have to do this more often.

After lunch the group is divided and they have to discuss all the reasons why women stay in relationships and why women leave relationships. Discussion rises to a good buzzing level. Each group has much to discuss. I walk from group to group and catch bits of information from each. Then they report back to the group. We look at the ambivalence that is caused in abusive relationships and complications experienced by women who are abused.

First we sum up why women return to their abusers. When women are so hurt and they leave because it is too dangerous, people ask “Why do they go back”? It is often the circumstances that determine why abused women return. My group says that women fear being alone and lonely. Losing their emotional dependence on their partners is difficult. Also most women are financially dependent upon their partners. If they leave them they will have to look after the children on their own, without accommodation, food and clothes. Dawn contributes to this discussion as she has experienced leaving her abusive husband.

They talk about women having no other accommodation, no job and no money. Abused women generally have no other place to live in when they leave their homes. They fear the reaction from their children leaving their fathers, their friends, their homes and changing schools or they say that women are given no choice. They are thrown out by the abuser and to their humiliation gossip and scandal spreads about them in the community.

The group then discuss how desperate an abused woman must be before she voluntarily leaves her home. She knows there is no chance for peace and the reality of the situation is much more dangerous for her and the children. Without a viable choice she will

have to leave the relationship to try and start a different life on her own.

If abused women go to a shelter as an option, most shelters will not take boys over the age of twelve. They will then have to split up their families. Shelters are not user-friendly especially for Xhosa women.

Families and friends also set social pressures on women to make the marriage work. The blame is placed on the women, even if some of them know what abuse they have been through, and what they have to endure. They will return to their partners and no one can understand why.

The group speaks about women who are religious and who go to their priests for help but get no help. The priests encourage women to keep the family together. Many priests tell them to go home and try to make things work out. The responsibility is placed on the women to keep the peace and not on the abusers.

The group is also critical of the police who are of no help either. The police see abuse as a family problem and do not want to interfere. They will come to a home where violence has been reported and the abuser will say “No officer, it is all fine here”. The police will leave the women to greater abuse. The group says this happens often.

The women in our group realise that these are some of the reasons why women return to abusive relationships. They realise that as community workers they will have to support them to resolve their problems.

At all times I reconnect my women to their work as effective community workers and healers. They are going to have to be the healers and supporters of these broken women. As with a ‘mosaic’ they are going to have to put the broken pieces of their clients’ lives together.

With each item discussed, the group becomes angrier, quieter and more subdued. Caroline says that men “Must bloody Eff off.” We laugh and agree with her. The patriarchal system where men have power and control over family members is burning inside all of us today.

Just before we finish our class for the day Rina calls me to one side and says that she would like to speak to me privately. When

everyone has left for home we stand on our veranda and Rina says that she cannot carry on training with Mosaic any longer. It seems as if the work is stirring up too many emotional and psychological issues for her and she cannot cope. The abuse is getting too difficult for her to manage. She needs to leave.

I try to encourage her to stay. She is tearful and tells me that it has nothing to do with the course but it has to do with her personal life. At present it has to do with her survival. I have to accept this. I ask her to come into class tomorrow to tell the other members of her group. They will also be sorry to hear her news.

The following day Rina does not come into class. I tell the women that Rina has sadly left our group. They are surprised and sorry that she does not see the training through. And during prayers and hymns they send love and healing to her in her pain and difficulties.

It has been another long week. No one realises how difficult this course will be, not only educationally but personally and emotionally. This training course is definitely not easy. It is the true melding place of their heads and hearts. It is our 'University of Life'.

Conflict Resolution

One of the coloured trainees asks if she can bring a video of gospel choirs into class to show to her colleagues. I agree. They have had a tense week and they deserve a little rest and recreation. Today I bring a TV into the room and we put the video on.

There is a knock on our door and Helen calls me out of the office for a moment. I am happy to leave as everyone is busy watching the video. Helen introduces me to a young woman called Mariet, an American woman who is living in Cape Town with her boyfriend for a couple of years. Helen tells her about our wonderful women who are doing the training course and she is interested and wants to know if she can join us and help in any way. We chat with Helen for possibly ten or fifteen minutes. Then I proudly invite her into the class to meet our trainees.

I confidently open the door. Horror of horrors. Pure pandemonium reigns. All hell breaks loose in the very short time that I have been out of the room. I cannot work out what has happened. Two separate camps are clearly formed along racial lines. There are voices raised with fingers jabbing at each other, jutting chins, hands on hips and angry body language. I am completely caught off guard. I am aghast and speechless.

In truth, I just want to turn tail and run. How am I going to bring order back into the group? Besides which, I do not know the women all that well and I am not sure of how to deal with them and I do not know our visitor.

The three Afrikaans speakers are confronting the nine Xhosa speakers and the Xhosa speakers are grouped in a bunch against them. The TV continues to provide a loud background of gospel singing. There is absolutely no indication when I leave the room that anything of this nature will occur. How embarrassing it is for me. Especially as I am bringing a new visitor in to meet these amazing women that Helen has told her about.

Of course, by this stage no-one is interested in the TV because they have something much more interesting and exciting to entertain them. I switch off the TV and I ask everyone to sit down and cool down. I introduced Mariet our visitor and tried to bring some decorum into the group. They introduce themselves to Mariet. They are still angry and now they are scared as well. Mariet leaves soon afterwards. In saying goodbye, I apologise and promise to call her when I get home.

With a madly beating heart and my head spinning, I tried to stay calm. I have no practical experience of dealing with conflict. I cannot show the women how nervous and upset I am. I ask them to tell me what happened. I should ask for a spokesperson but in my inexperience I just pose a general question to the group.

Each group wants to speak at the same time. Everywhere I look I see breasts heaving and I hear flashing accusations from both sides. It is no laughing matter. How undisciplined and disrespectful they are towards each other. How out of my depth I am.

Tammy and I simply and naively design a training course and there is no planned thinking about conflict of this kind. I only know that I have to fly by the seat of my pants. I pray to God that I can resolve the issue and stay grounded enough to find the lessons that need to be learnt.

While I am out of the room a classic case of misunderstanding is experienced. This disagreement is brought about by the differences in language and culture. The legacy of Apartheid, so close to the cusp of our democracy one short year ago is brought firmly into the room. The Apartheid regime did a superb job of cutting our people off from each other and pitting our racial groups one against the another.

The women tell me that they do not know how the altercation begins. But slowly through asking some questions and acquiring information from them, I get the gist of what happened.

Bertha, the 'bossy' coloured trainee who brings the gospel video into class says that the Xhosa women were gossiping about them. When the coloured women asked for some explanation, the Xhosa women were so busy laughing and talking to each other that no-one responded. The Gospel music sung by coloured choirs does not interest them. They would rather talk to each other in Xhosa.

The women who do not speak Xhosa are outnumbered. They feel vulnerable and conspired against. The chief spokesperson for the coloured group then starts the furore. The Xhosa women feel offended by their accusations and retaliate. They begin to shout and adamantly deny that they said anything negative about their coloured colleagues. The uproar is intensified and the 'bossy' trainee is slap-bang in the middle of the dispute.

After speaking to me one after the other they all appear to calm down. I gain a greater understanding of the argument. We shall have to work through their anger and hurt feelings for this group to stay together. They do not know how the impact of their uninhibited and disrespectful disagreement is shocking and shaking me. The group can easily fall apart.

I explain that I understand how the smaller group feels threatened when they do not know what the larger group is talking about. I say that the Xhosa group is sharing and laughing with each other in a language that the others do not understand. They have no idea of how it affects the other trainees. I ask them to mentally exchange roles to see how they feel.

It is important to listen to other people and hear what they are saying, and not engage in conflict. I tell them that I hold no offence against any of them; it is just an unfortunate incident of miscommunication, and a disregard for the 'other'. Instinctively I give them a framework for resolving the conflict. I put some strict ground rules in place. I have to be firm and they all have to adhere to the rules.

Firstly they have to each take turns to speak and not speak all at once. They must put up their hands if they have something to say. They are not allowed to interrupt the person who is speaking. They can speak again when the others are finished speaking.

Each person has to speak as they wish to be spoken to. They may not be rude. I inform them that we are all human and we all have different opinions and feelings. This is a natural process. They are definitely not allowed to point fingers at each other. No-one is allowed to talk about 'she' because 'she' has a name. No-one is allowed to talk 'through me' but has to address the person by name whilst looking at her.

Even though it is challenging to confront someone immediately after an argument it is better than delaying it. They need to be aware of this. They must not let conflict prolong itself where problems increase and are very difficult and complicated to undo. Putting off confronting the issues for whatever reason, develops into hidden agendas and causes chaos in the group. They have to address confrontation quickly and in the short term and not in the long term. 'Beware', I warn them, I do not want to learn of any hidden agendas that they keep hidden in our group.

I add one more rule to our book. Everyone has to speak English. Some of the Xhosa women say that it is not fair because they do not really know English. Jean really complains. I tell them that this is our rule.

They break into small groups where they have to discuss the cause of the conflict and express how they feel. They have to use our new rules of communication to try and gain an understanding of what has just happened to them. As they face each other head-on and say how they are feeling about what has just happened, the group must give them feedback about their verbal and non-verbal behaviour.

They seem apologetic for behaving as they did. I know it is going to take time to heal the rifts and resolve their dispute. I cannot say that there is no tension in the room. We all do not feel sure of ourselves. They see how easy it is to get into a heated argument and for it to quickly blow up.

However, it takes enormous courage to talk about the cause of the conflict with someone and trying to sort it out. It is the hardest testing ground and one of the greatest lessons for us all to learn from. Especially as community workers, they will have to work with their abused clients and educate them about the rules of communication and help them to resolve their own conflict. The sooner the conflict is resolved the easier it will be for them.

At the final go-around they each have to comment individually. Only when each person is able to feel more comfortable with the group and when they have apologised and accepted apologies, are they able to go home.

Today they are subdued and walk out of the classroom quietly. They are still wary of each other and the group is divided as they walk

down the passage to the lifts. They will later say that it was the best learning lesson in conflict resolution that they could ever have received and experienced.

Journal September 1995

"Because of everything that happens today, when I park my car in my garage I am shaken and unsettled. It was such a close call. The group could have easily split and we would not have had the trust to bring it back together again. I thanked God a thousand times for helping me. I couldn't get over how I got through it all.

I had to call Mariet because she must have wondered what was going on. I was so apologetic and I expressed regret for the activities of the day. We had a little laugh and we recognised the wry humour in the situation. She said that she is pleased that it happened when she was in the room as she still wants to support Mosaic.

Then I phoned Helen because she heard the uproar when I opened the door. We laughed, understanding the multitude of complex differences between the cultures. Heaven knows how difficult this course is. I can't say that it is not interesting!"

In the go-arounds they share with me how nervous they felt when they realised what they had done. During the dispute they were certain that I was going to tell them to get out and go. They thought I would say 'Out! Get out! If you cannot behave yourselves, I do not want to have anything more to do with you.' They say that this is the way that white women have treated them in the past and they were sure that I would have the same response.

They cannot get over the fact that I did not kick them out. For them, misbehaviour has always been a cause for dismissal from their jobs and the workplace. Instead I address the valuable issue of 'conflict'. In order to resolve conflict we have to heal and repair the damages that it causes in ourselves and others.

I make them understand that conflict is not a 'negative' but can become a 'positive' situation. During conflict there are so many lessons that can be learnt and so many hidden agendas that can be uncovered. They listen to me with utter astonishment. For them it is a revelation. They are all scared of conflict. Conflict is to be avoided

and not dealt with. In fact, this conflict situation took a lot of bravery for them to address, me included.

They understand what chaos they easily introduced into the group. I tell them that chaos means danger and opportunity. We need to avoid the danger and concentrate on the opportunity for growth and understanding. It can happen again and they now know that they must deal with the conflict immediately.

They come to understand that Mosaic is truly a different place. No matter what happens and no matter how difficult the lessons are, they can feel safe and secure. They are not punished, but we use what emerges as empowering personal lessons instead. They learn about respect, trust, honesty, love and caring for each other. These are the absolute cornerstones that we have to adhere to. I repeat that for me, their welfare is paramount.

As for them, clients cannot be healed when communication breaks down. I explain that mutual trust, confidence and communication are vital for healing their clients. If they behave inappropriately it will lead to breaks and blocks in communication with their abused clients. Their skills and caring are crucial for healing.

At the end of this module on Women Abuse they are qualified to identify and to tackle the complicated issues of abuse. They have all felt the conflict and what it means to discriminate and be discriminated against. They now have additional skills to work with in their community.

I am proud of them for opening their minds and their hearts. I am grateful that they can grow and share with me and we can learn so much about each other. We daily learn about each person and our different cultures. They are affording me the privileged access that has been denied to me for my whole life. How fortunate am I?

Tammy and I have created miracles in the shortest time possible. I do not know of another organisation that takes a group of disadvantaged, and abused community workers from grassroots level, and thoroughly trains and educates them as para-professional to take care of abused women in their communities.

This training programme binds us strongly as a group and it makes Mosaic unique in the world of NGOs. We shall hold ourselves

together through thick and thin on the rollercoaster ride of Mosaic. I know that there will be many confusing and challenging times ahead of us but if we stand together we are strong.

Dealing with Clients

Dealing with Clients focuses on counselling individual clients. The group has to learn how to work with their clients and point them towards an ultimate Plan of Action. It is one of the most important Modules of this whole training course and counselling can change people's lives. Our group of women are finding out that this is true.

Xhosa people do not know about 'counselling' and how counselling can help them. There is so much gossip in the coloured community that women are afraid to trust someone who can counsel them and to whom they can talk freely and share deeply with. It will be our community workers' education to assure their clients that they can gain from, and become strong by sharing their problems. It will be challenging to educate them.

Our women will have to deal with their own problems that have already surfaced in their personal sharing during the last module on Woman Abuse. Tammy and I have only given this module four weeks to complete. Before we begin I realise that it is probably going to take much longer than four short weeks. I know that it is going to be the most important teaching and healing period for these women.

Every one of the women in my group is damaged in spirit. They are damaged through the apartheid system and through being broken down by living with poverty, discrimination and deprivation. They are broken down from the abuse they have suffered and they have to heal their brokenness before they can heal their clients.

When they walk into the classroom on Monday morning they are rather quiet. The course is tiring and the topics are intense. It requires their consistent energy and attention. They have to be awake and responsive in class and pay attention to my instructions and questions during every lesson.

We pray this morning. Lulu prays in Xhosa as we sit with our eyes closed and our hands held in the circle. Then Sheilla brings her deep base voice into the room and they all sing in Xhosa and some of us listen and are incorporated into 'Ngosi Sihlangene... We are

gathered in your house dear God... We thank You and ask You to stay with us and be with us". The hymn is solemnly reverent and as I hear them singing in harmony I am humbled and lifted in faith. I only know the tune so I allow myself to become immersed into their blending voices. When we are finished, we sit for a quiet moment. We slowly gather ourselves together for the learning of the day.

During the go-around we talk about how the last module has influenced them and how their relationships have changed. I ask them how they are feeling about proceeding with the next topic which is learning to counsel clients. They are excited.

I share with them that I want to train them as para-professional helpers. They will not be professionally trained but I shall share all my professional skills with them so that they can counsel and support their communities. In South Africa in particular there is a desperate need to train para-professionals. It is so empowering for me to be able to pass these counselling skills on to them and to help and heal them in the process.

They are ready for action. They think that the module will be an easy one where they will understand how they can help others. Little do they know that they will also be focusing on themselves and their own problems?

They will be faced with disclosure and there will be breakdowns. It is only by sharing their stories that they can be healed. I tell them that as counsellors they will have to enter into healing relationships with their clients and counsel them with abuse, with health issues and problems with children, family and friends.

The first exercise has them look at the importance of knowing why they are motivated to help. They have to look at their relationships and question why they want to help others. What do they gain from helping others?

During this exercise they learn about themselves as well as their clients and they understand that they have been playing a helping role in their communities for many years. They are 'natural' healers. People come to them for help and they give them their time and attention.

The next task is to look at the gains and losses of being in the role of the helper. Some of their 'gains' speak of personal power and

self-esteem when helping others. It is valuable and important when others can rely on them for help and they find that there is meaning in their lives when they assist others. There is a reciprocal giving and receiving from these relationships. It makes them feel worthy. It is an additional benefit to be trusted and respected to heal communities' problems. However, they have to be humble in this powerful healing role.

They tell me that in every township there are Street Committees that deal with problems that emerge from the neighbours in the street. If a woman is abused and she goes to the Street Committee she will ask them to help her to stop the fighting. Sometimes they will talk to the abuser but often nothing happens. The abusive men in the street are often friendly with the chairperson of the committees or they are on the committees themselves. The abused woman does not receive the help that she needs.

If our group of trainees can gain the respect of the Street Committees where they live, they hope that they will be able to make a difference in the lives of abused women. In addition they will lead the way for 'women empowerment' by being courageous role models for their client's children and families.

When we discuss some of their 'losses' they realise that they do not really take care of themselves. They become involved in other people's needs and problems. When they think about others they realise that they can hide or ignore their own real problems and sweep them under the carpet. Another loss that they share is by giving away too much of themselves and this can lead to burn-out.

I point out that taking responsibility for a client's problems is a 'loss'. If they take over responsibility they will worry about their client's safety at night and they will not be able to sleep. This is harmful to them and their health. Another negative aspect that they have to resolve is how their families will feel about people coming into their small homes for counselling. They all agree with me and they say that what we have spoken about 'is true'.

Journal October 1995

"We are a diverse group of special people. Some of the women are worrying me. They came over well in the interview but now I am having a bit of difficulty.

One of them is the oldest of the group, just a bit younger than me. I have to remember that she started the commotion in class with the video. There is something about her that is not quite what I want it to be. She tries to dominate and the other women are not sure of her either. I know that she is well-meaning but she seems to have false pride and that will certainly not do for a Mosaic community worker.

Today I thought how all of my life experiences have enabled me to do what I am doing now. My teaching, my university education, my counselling, my personal experience, my spirituality and my philosophy – all of these things put together have given me the skills and the ability to be, if I can say so, a good teacher and trainer.

At times I realise with great surprise just how skilful I am and I am amazed at what comes out of my mouth. Sometimes the issues which we are led into by unplanned processes and which I have to deal with ‘off the cuff’ show me just how resourceful I am and how much I am able to give to these women. The women just seem to think that I can give it all and they have confidence in me but no one is more amazed than me at how I cope.

I do not think that I am the greatest but I am learning about myself daily and it is almost as if I am an interested observer of myself in the process. It is weird and wonderful. Each day is another hurdle that I have to jump over with these women. And sometimes I knock the bar over. However, it all feels ‘right’ for me to be doing this and I hope that when I get to the modules that are less stressful, it will be easier”.

It is stressed that counsellors are not advisors. They are facilitators. They help the clients to find their own ways to solve their problems and they must not tell them what to do. They must empower the clients to take control. I ask them “If your advice does not work out, who will be blamed?” They realise that they will get blamed. With the best of intentions it is not their right to give advice. And ultimately it is not their responsibility.

We discuss the groups’ genuine concern about clients who share stories that they feel difficult to accept. No matter what the clients reveal to them they must always know that they are accepted and feel understood. They must not be judgmental or make accusations. They have to sense their clients’ feelings but not lose control. Their right

is their right and the clients' rights are their rights and they must support them.

They all agree that the counselling relationship must be warm and supportive so that the clients feel able to share their feelings. They refer to their interaction with each other and say that a smile and a 'careful listening ear' gives them courage to share personal stories. The careful listening ear is ultimately so important. A counsellor has to learn how to listen carefully to their clients.

Just as in the previous module when they did not realise that they were abused, so I remind them that their clients do not have the words to describe what is going on with them. In fact they tell me that in Xhosa there is no word for 'abuse'. They must educate their clients about abuse and give information and support to their clients.

Then we finally talk about relationships that are 'give and take'. We say it should rather be 'give and give'. In a relationship when they give, then the other automatically receives. It becomes abusive when one person always takes and the other person always gives.

The day passes quickly. For all of us it is a relief when they fill in their forms, pack their bags and go home. But they have homework to do tonight. There is so much that they learn but now they have to integrate it all.

Today we talk about 'conversations'. They say that they can have a conversation with a friend or group of friends. They can talk about anything that comes to mind. They can gossip, transfer information to and from each other. They can give advice, be judgmental, tease and crack jokes. I ask if people can come and go in the middle of their conversation. They answer 'yes'. Nobody really takes a conversation seriously. In a conversation with many of their friends nobody has the trust to really share their deep personal problems. They exchange surface information. They admit that there is no confidentiality in a conversation. Anyone can talk about anything and for the members of the group it is an ability to share their private issues with anybody outside of the group.

Then we discuss 'counselling'. There are definite differences and definite rules. Confidentiality of information is the most important difference between a 'conversation' and a 'counselling' session. No information can be shared out of the counselling session. It is a

private and confidential time to focus on the client's problems. Their secrets are only for the client to share within the counselling session and not for them to share with others. However if they need help and assistance regarding their client's problems they can share it with me, their supervisor.

They realise that during counselling, other people may not enter the room or come and go at any point during a session. It must be as quiet and as private as possible. They cannot criticise or be judgmental in counselling. Only a skilled counsellor can lead the session by asking relevant questions and getting the correct answers back from the client.

Next we talk about the different types of counselling. We discuss Crisis, Short-term and Long-term counselling.

Crisis counselling focuses on the immediate crisis that the client experiences. It is the first encounter that they will have with their client. They may only see their client once. They realise that Crisis counselling is essential for their clients who experience trauma with abuse or rape. They agree that this is what they will often do.

Short-term counselling is an extension of the initial Crisis counselling. It is when their clients need more time and assistance to talk through their problems. They will probably see their clients two to four times.

The women think that they will see very few people for Long-term counselling. Some clients may want to set up more regular meetings that may take a longer time to resolve, over a longer period of time.

Their Handout includes definite rules of how a counsellor may behave. We do a little role play with a client and a counsellor. I give them a brief summary of what they must do during the role play.

In this role play Caroline who plays the client talks to Sheilla who is her counsellor. When Caroline tells Sheilla about her problems that she does not have money or food for her kids, Sheilla listens to her and becomes very upset. She becomes over-sympathetic and shows too much active emotion. She cries even louder than Caroline. And as Caroline continues talking Sheilla cries so hard that we cannot even hear Caroline's voice.

Everyone packs up laughing, but they agree that they cannot behave like Sheilla. The client does not feel happy and Sheilla is not behaving professionally. They cannot cry with their client even if her problems seem hopeless and it upsets them. They agree that they must definitely have control over themselves and convey an open, pleasant and confident manner. Mostly, they have to be patient and trustworthy. I remind them that if their client falls into a dark hole of despair they cannot fall in with her. They have to stay detached in an empathic way so that they can pull the client out of despair and depression and work with her towards her healing. If they fall into the hole with her neither of them will be able to come out.

Personal protection is critically important for these women if they are to survive multiple cases of helpless, hopeless sessions with destitute and abused clients. I give them an image that should protect them emotionally from their overload of heavy counselling sessions.

I conjure up the 'The Chicken Wire Fence'. I tell them that they will have to erect a chicken wire fence between their clients and themselves. In this way when their clients open up to their problems, their information has to drop onto the clients' side of the Chicken Wire Fence, and not onto theirs. They can still see and hear their clients and communicate with them but they cannot allow them to pour their painful problems into their laps. After many emotional days of counselling of five or six abused clients they will burn out. They will be concerned about their clients until they hopefully see them again. This is not professionally correct. The 'Chicken Wire Fence' is an important symbol of self-protection in the process. When they erect it, it will give them a feeling of distance from the clients' problems and it will help them to survive as counsellors.

I also give them a ritual to follow before each counselling session. It will allow them to divest themselves of responsibility for each and every client. I ask them to close their eyes and answer each question out loud as I ask them:

"Would your client's problem exist if you didn't know about it?

If you hadn't heard about your client's problem would you be as upset as you are now?

Is this your problem or your clients' problem?

Can you allow it to become your problem?

Can you save or rescue your client?

What are you qualified to do for her?

Has God brought this problem to her to punish her, or for her learning?

Can you ask God to please surround and protect your client with God's light and love when she leaves you?

And keep her safe?"

They realise that they have to hand their clients back to God. They are not God. They do not know why the lessons are brought to their clients but they have to empower them to learn the lessons of change, growth and survival. It is important that they quietly ask God to protect their clients when they leave the counselling session.

At the end of this exercise they practice counselling their partners using the skills for protection. It has to become a habit and this will take time. However, they share that the 'Chicken Wire Fence' and the questions are helpful.

We discuss an 'If-But Client'. When questioned, this client may say that she wants to leave her abusive husband but then she gives reasons for not leaving. These clients block, avoid or try to hide information from themselves or from the counsellors. If my group finds 'If-But Clients', who repeat 'I would, if I could, but I cannot' then they are not ready for the counselling process.

I advise the class that before counselling they have to assess the client to see if she is the right person to counsel.

'Does she smell as if she has been drinking?

Do you think that she is on drugs because of her behaviour?

Is she mentally disturbed because many abused women suffer with mental disturbances?"

If she exhibits these symptoms, I advise the class that these clients cannot be counselled. They can refer them to a social worker to assess her further.

As with all their services they have to assess their own 'selves' physically and mentally.

'Are they behaving professionally?

Are they suitably dressed in appearance?

How is their body language and are their arms and legs crossed to cut off communication with their client?

Are they maintaining a healthy distance from the client's problem?

Are they coping with the session or are they getting 'hooked in' by the client and being manipulated?

And are they well or are they feeling ill?

How they present and observe themselves is crucial for the counsellor-client relationship to develop. And they also must realise that they will not cope with the session if they are being manipulated or not feeling well.

We discuss the differences between hearing and listening. I talk about hearing music playing in the background and not focusing on it. Then I contrast it to listening to the music and remembering the tune and the words. We discuss how 'listening' is an important skill that has to be used by a counsellor during the whole counselling session. They have to listen carefully to understand the client's problem. Their focus must be on what is being said and they have to listen carefully so that they can understand and remember what they hear. I cannot stop repeating how the skill of a successful counsellor is also the skill of keeping quiet and listening to their clients.

Responding to clients is another important skill. I ask them to get up and choose a partner. They have to perform an exercise in responding and keeping eye contact. The one person must try and make eye contact and get their partner's attention. Their partner must avoid eye contact. Their heads and their eyes must move all over the room and not look at their partner.

When they start the exercise the one partner jumps from side to side trying to make eye contact with her partner. They laugh because it is difficult not to look their partners in the eye. It is frustrating. Then they change over. They agree that it is fun doing the exercise but they are not comfortable nor do they trust their partner when there is no response. They need eye contact. They understand how crucial responding is for communication with their clients. It creates one of their primary connections.

Now we move into the skill of asking questions. Questions are also primary elements of the counselling session. They have to ask questions and this skill will unlock the clients' information. But they

need to know how to pose the different questions in order to get short or long answers from their clients.

They need to know about *Closed Questions* getting short specific information. *Fairly Open Questions* getting slightly more information. *Open Questions* which will give them the bulk of their information. They have to know how to use these questions. However, the trick is that they need to think about the answers that they want from their clients before they construct these questions. Do they want specific short facts, or do they want more information?

We begin with Closed Questions which have a one word or a 'yes or no' answer to them. I ask them: "What is your name"? "Are you married?" "Do you have children"?

Then I ask Fairly Open Questions which gives me some more information. Their answers are a bit longer and I get more information. "What has happened to your face?" "Who has tried to hurt you?" "Who do you stay with?"

They practice but when they ask the person sitting next to them Closed Questions and Fairly Open Questions they say it is frustrating because they are not able to expand their stories. It is like being stopped at stop streets at every street corner. They see that a counselling session cannot only contain Closed and Fairly Open questions.

They then have to choose a partner and ask her Open Questions. They first need to think of the answer they want to receive before they create the question. "Can you tell me what your partner does to you when he is abusive?" "When you left your husband where did you go and who tried to help you?"

They are surprised because they have not known that the information that they receive has to do with the questions that they ask. These three kinds of questions are surprising for them to learn about. Now they know that questioning is an important skill that they have to learn to use.

Then we look at turning a Statement into a Question and this is another skill that they have to learn. It is useful when there is silence in the session, when it is difficult to find a question or when they need to gather themselves emotionally together. They repeat the last thing that their clients say and turn it into a question. When the client

says “I think I want to leave home”, the counselor responds with “Are you thinking you want to leave home”? When they repeat the question from their clients’ statement, it confirms for the client that they hear what she is saying. It buys the counselor some time to form her next question. It is a useful skill to use.

Judgmental Questions are dangerous and they must avoid them at all costs. They disempower the client and lower her self-esteem. The question places the blame on the client and undermines her trust both in herself and the counsellor. Their clients will never forget a hurtful judgmental question and will not return for more sessions. They can ruin their reputation as counsellors. “Why” questions are usually judgmental. “Why did you walk alone at night when you know it is dangerous?” The group tells us that people say to abused women “Why do you not give him enough sex?” When we do a role play containing Judgmental questions they feel uncomfortable and they know that someone cannot trust them if they ask these questions.

Today they learn that questions cannot be the same for them anymore. Questions are compulsory tools for counselling. But it is a skill to use questions correctly.

Journal October 1995

“Today I also felt like crying in class just like Ntombi who was crying when I lost it and I started shouting at her. In fact I was also in tears, tears of desperation, but I really wanted to cry properly. I wanted to take her and shake her. She irritates me so much because she doesn’t do her homework and she acts like the material is brand new for her. She is one of the women who has often sat back and allowed the others to do the work for her.

I was recapping work that we have gone over ad nauseum in class. Then I asked her about the different types of questions that we can ask and why we use them. She looked at me as if I was asking her something that she had never heard of in her life. I couldn’t believe that she could do this. I just felt all my energy drain from me and then I felt so desperate and useless.

When she looks at me sideways with a stupid squint look on her face I wish that I hadn’t taken her onto this course. I have serious reservations about her going into the community and representing Mosaic in the best possible way. I am not saying that her look has anything to do with her competency level but her stupidity is compounded by the look that she gives me. Oh dear!”

It is another day. And there is more work to cover. After our prayer and hymn we settle into the go-around. I pay no attention to Ntombi. I cannot put myself into the distressed state that I was in yesterday.

Today they are going to learn about Process Commentary. It is a tricky but useful skill. It comments on what they observe that is happening in front of them at that moment. By regarding her client carefully she can say “I am sure that your tears are very close to the surface, am I right”? She may get a response with a nod or shake of her head.

They have to remember that they must comment on what is happening as it happens. When the counsellor realises that it is very quiet she can give process commentary and say “It is very quiet at the moment”. And then she can ask “Are you okay”? It is useful to open clients up to their feelings or to information that they want to hide from themselves and from the counsellor.

Process Commentary is useful for them to use where a client has been raped and she finds difficulty in communicating. I tell the group that I will play the role of a raped woman. The group has to use Process Commentary to get me to respond. I sit quietly and I just look down at my hands. They are not commenting correctly on what they observe in front of them. Their comments require long answers by asking me “What happened to you?” “How can we help you?” I am not going to answer their questions because they have to use Process Commentary to get me to respond.

They soon begin to run dry. They are bunched around me and they do not know what else to say to get my response. I can hear by the irritation in their voices that they are frustrated and stymied. I am secretly amused. They do not understand Process Commentary so I just remain silent. Jean is the one who really has no patience with me. Suddenly Jean’s exasperation gets the better of her and she shouts loudly at me “Excuse me lady! Will you come to the point?” It is so unexpected and funny and everyone packs up laughing, including me.

We go back to the drawing board and I tell them about what they are doing incorrectly. They should say “It seems to me that it is difficult for you to talk right now, am I correct?” or “It seems like you are hurt. Am I right?” If they make these process comments of

what I am going through, I would communicate by nodding or shaking my head.

I tell them that from the initial Process Commentary they can then move into a counselling session. For example they can comment that “It seems to me that you are finding it difficult to talk”. Then they ask “Am I right?” Then if she responds with a nod or shake of her head they can follow through with other questions. The first comment gives you entry into the client’s silent space of thought and then she can answer you. And the session begins.

They need their client’s feedback to know if they are on track. They do not know if what they are saying to her is correct they can always begin Process Commentary with “It seems to me....” and at the end of the comment the counsellor must confirm if she is correct by asking “Am I right?”

Journal October 1995

“Jean is such a character and comes out with really funny remarks. Jean doesn’t know how funny she is because she says things as she thinks them and they come through in their unsophisticated honesty. She doesn’t filter her replies. It is refreshing and unexpected. For me it is hilarious. I remember when Jean did her role play during the Assertiveness Module. She became frustrated with the person with whom she was being assertive and who wasn’t listening to her. Eventually in exasperation she blurted out “Are you deaf?” It was all the more hilarious because they know that without a doubt these are the things that we definitely do not say to our clients. But believe me, there are many times when I want to ask them the same question – ‘Are you deaf?’

They all have their own quirks and mannerisms and we rip each other off all the time. There is a lot of humour in the group and this often saves the day. It creates the balance to difficult learning and helps us with the often sad and difficult sharing of their stories.”

At the end of the day I realise that they are still struggling with Process Commentary but they have a better idea of the skill and how they can use it. They all agree that it is a useful tool for counselling. It is so simple and so effective by addressing things as they happen at the time. After our afternoon go-around their evaluation forms are

filled in. Their feedback shows me that I need to continue with Process Commentary as it is still confusing for most of them.

Journal October 1995

"It is difficult to teach counselling skills when counselling is under my skin. When I unpack the skills there are so many things for the trainees to learn before it becomes a natural process. When I counsel I just use my skills and ask questions and I don't analyse them. But they have to do it step by step until it comes naturally.

Before now they have just asked questions and haven't analysed them. If they aren't aware of which questions to ask, there will be awkward silence in the session. They don't want this to happen. When they counsel, their minds have to go back and forth to different places at the same time. They have to assess the client as well as themselves and observe if they are behaving congruently.

The ability to understand and use all of the terminology is fundamental for them as counsellors. It is difficult for them to learn everything and integrate and use them. I can't move on until I am satisfied that they are all able to counsel with confidence. I can't do this in the allotted four weeks and eventually I may not be able to complete all of the modules that Tammy and I included in the course training."

All the time and every day we learn new and exciting things. It is challenging and interesting. Training is moving full steam ahead and the women are growing daily.

Abortion, Adoption, Witchcraft

This week we stumble onto unplanned and spontaneous topics brought up by the women. Gloria brings these topics into class. Our prepared module about facilitation of Support Groups has to take a break as we deal with their own preferences for discussion. The women are determined that we discuss these topics. They are infused with energy and enthusiasm and are brim-full with their own stories.

These topics include abortion, adoption and witchcraft relating to their beliefs in the Xhosa community. I am fascinated and naïve regarding the cultural aspects of the topics and so are the coloured women in the group. Our Xhosa women are keen to discuss their embedded cultural beliefs ingrained in their society.

I am totally unprepared for this and our formal lessons have to stop. I hear their stories for the first time. Today the tide is really turning. I am definitely the one to be taught. Besides which, I have no control or choice because they take over. I have a lot to learn.

Tammy and I once again did not know that these particular topics would have specific cultural implications for the trainees. We do not even include 'cultural beliefs' in our course planning. We come purely from our white professional perspective. These topics are part and parcel of each of our Xhosa women in our group. These are women who come directly from the community and they are not sophisticated in many ways. They have beliefs that have continued for generations and their reality is so foreign to mine.

Firstly Gloria brings up the subject of abortion. She says that many women have back-street abortions that are expensive and very dangerous, and we all agree. They tell us that the person who does the abortions uses a coat hanger to do the abortion.

We all discuss the risk of death from 'back street' abortions which is significantly high in their community. Many of our women know of women who have died from these abortions. Women put themselves at great risk. It is desperate to think that pregnant women have no option and put their lives at stake. The laws have to change

and we all hope that our new government will legalise abortions. We talk about pro-life rallies and the people who oppose abortions. They ask how will a woman cope who has no money and who cannot afford to keep a baby? How will she cope if she is raped or deserted?

Our trainees are open minded and say that if their client has an abortion or wants an abortion they will support her. She must be educated to know that up until she is three months pregnant, she can have a safe abortion. To have a safe abortion from a clinic that conducts abortions she cannot be more than five months pregnant.

Now they want to talk about adoption. Their beliefs on adoption are new to me. They tell me that Xhosa women who give birth to babies and who do not want them cannot have them adopted. They tell me that there are very few Xhosa families that will allow adoption of black babies because they do not know the fathers or to which clan the baby belongs.

Everyone in the Xhosa community belongs to Isidukos or clans. Their Isiduko comes from their father's clan. Two people from the same clan may not marry. They cannot allow adoption because they do not know from which birth-clan the baby is born. One day the baby might unknowingly marry someone from its own Isiduko. With black families this is very important especially with the older generation. In-laws are very powerful forces in Xhosa families and they can make the life of a daughter-in-law pure hell. In addition, the elders of the family hold on fiercely to cultural traditions and customs. Especially when an oldest male child will hold all the inherited power. Even if women cannot fall pregnant, adoption is taboo. She will be childless. It can be emotionally shattering for these women because to be childless is a stigma and shame for Xhosa women and for all the family.

Witchcraft then enters into our conversation. I am apprehensive and somewhat confused because I know nothing about the fascinating topic of witchcraft in the Xhosa culture. I wonder how many of our women believe in witchcraft. It is quite intimidating for me to think that they do. They talk about sangomas and witchcraft.

They tell me about the different kinds of witchcraft. There is Korobela which is less scary and more like bewitching. There is Ukuthakatha the bad and dangerous witchcraft, the black magic.

When a person uses Ukuthakatha against someone they Umthakhati that person.

Korobela can be used between partners. If a wife wants to have control over her husband she can Korobela him and vice versa. She places potions, muti, in his food and her husband will do what she wants because she has Korobela'd him. If a man is having an affair with another woman he can say that the woman Korebela'd him. And his wife is helpless and obviously blames the mistress for korobela'ing her husband. If she wants to, she can go to the sangoma and Umthakhati the mistress for making her husband have an affair with her.

Sangomas can bewitch someone, or take witchcraft from someone who has been bewitched. Sangomas are powerful in the Xhosa community. It costs hundreds of rands to visit a sangoma. Yet disadvantaged Xhosa people will beg, steal and borrow money to pay them for their services. There are sangomas who defraud the innocent, poor and susceptible in the community. They make lotions and potions and can pit people one against the other.

The women say that many sangomas purposefully hook their clients into visiting them regularly. In a dispute, the sangoma usually puts blame on one person and then sets the cat amongst the pigeons as a continual source of umthakhati'ing and counter-umthakhati'ing which takes place, one person against the other.

The women tell me stories of how sangomas can start trouble in families or with friends. For example, a sangoma can possibly say that a woman's child died because her jealous sister-in-law umthakhati'd the child. Then there will be major rifts in the family. The family will then go to the sangoma and he will umthakhati the sister-in-law. Ultimately the sangoma benefits from the conflict that has been created.

They tell me about rabbit's feet put at people's gates and of small mirrors buried in the sand to reflect bad luck to the person with whom they are in conflict. The intricacies are explained as well as their ingrained beliefs. I am stunned. It is like trying to unknot a deeply tangled root system. All of my trainees are Christians. But the sangomas who are the fortune tellers and bone throwers in the black community, are part of their African Cultural tradition. These cultural

beliefs are deeply ingrained in them and are intertwined with their Christian religious beliefs. It is very difficult for me to separate truth from fiction, fact from fantasy and reality from superstition.

I am stunned. Most of the trainees sincerely believe these stories as honest fact. When we start talking about them in a more critical way and I show my scepticism, they tell me “Nyani (truly) Rolene, this really happens!” Their stories are fascinating and most of my women believe them.

As they talk there is an aura of awe and mysterious danger in the classroom surrounding their sharing. It is as if by repeating the stories about sangomas they are doing something dangerously taboo and courting bad luck. I want to break the spell but I do not know how to do it. I let them talk whilst I question them for more and more information. I have to admit that I am out of my depth because I am totally unprepared for this. I am learning so much about their lives. Their belief system frightens me. I am in a deep rough sea. I feel that I have no anchor to keep me stable.

For a long while, talking animatedly and including me in the debate, they are caught up in their belief system in which they have grown up. They do not question the authenticity of their beliefs. For them, sangomas are honest in their services to the community. They are held in awe and people are wary of them. I cannot understand how they can believe and accept such damaging conspiracies that come from many sangomas over many generations.

They know that I do not believe them. I stop asking questions and stop mediating between them. I try to put forward an accommodating exterior but they know that I have deep reservations about their beliefs. Listening to them I am troubled. The group cannot afford to be superstitious and they have to break down their own and their client’s belief in the challenging super-natural.

When I am really drowning in stories I ask if there is anyone who can please tell me about sangomas that they distrust and who are dishonest. Eventually they start talking about corrupt sangomas. What an absolute relief for me. I feel as though I can get a small grip on the debate. Now they are talking my talk. Hallelujah.

Lulu tells us about a sangoma who stands in the middle of a small stream and the clients stand on the banks. They camp there the night

before and the sangoma gives his messages during the following day. He has an anonymous assistant who chats to them during the previous night before he gives his messages. The assistant gets information from them and passes this on to the sangoma. When it is their turn to get their message, he gives them information that only they are supposed to know about. Before he speaks to them they have to wrap and tie money around a stone and throw it into the water for him. Lulu says that they have to pay large sums of money for this service. I am grateful to Lulu for this story. It breaks the ice and is a turning point for me.

I am relieved when they start talking about other sangomas who are dishonest, who lead people on so that they can get money from them. Finally the veils are falling from their eyes. I point out that by putting their trust in sangomas it is his form of abusing them. They are shocked that I am associating sangomas with abuse. I point out that this ingrained belief in sangomas gives him power and control and takes people's power and control away from them. They will become weak believing in the sangoma's super-natural power. The group thinks about what I have to say and some of them hesitatingly start to agree with me.

Then the coloured women tell us about the Muslim women with similar belief systems about witchcraft called Doekom - their witchdoctors are called Saities. Our coloured women are more western and Christian based, but many Muslims believe in the Saities and their witchcraft.

I ask God for guidance because I am far from my comfort zone. I suddenly realise that I can only tackle the topic by asking them if they believe in God. I want them to tell me who is more powerful, God or the sangoma? Of course all of them say it is God. It is a different tack and it takes some fear-provoking energy out of the room. It grounds me. I ask if those who believe in sangomas will stand in front of them to account for themselves when they die one day. They say "No, we shall stand before God". And all I can say is "Thank you God for steering me on this safe pathway towards you".

Yet I feel like a betrayer and a traitor, breaking down their belief system and placing serious doubt in their minds. As a white woman I feel that I have discredited their cultural tradition. I know that the

belief in the magic of the sangoma can have a devastating effect on them and on their clients. They have to expose the overwhelming and harmful power of the sangoma and protect their clients from this dangerous system of mind-control.

I try to show them that a sangoma is only a person who may have supernatural gifts and who studies the super-natural and performs rituals. There are sangomas who can easily use them in dangerous or self-seeking ways. They can use these gifts to meet their own needs for power or control, and they can manipulate and control people for their own gain or they can use them in healing ways. They agree that sangomas are powerful people.

We talk about the powers out there that we cannot see but which can be accessed by certain people who are gifted and know how to access them. If a person has God given gifts and uses them for healing and loving guidance, without exploiting or harming another person, then they are using their gifts in the proper way. Any person who uses the sangoma to predict the future should do so with extreme caution and know that the predictions can possibly be incorrect and dangerous.

It is stimulating to listen to the women and especially to learn from them. But I am concerned about their own superstition and spiritual aspects of their beliefs. These can be dangerous for them and for their clients. We have to explore these discussions fully. On an ongoing basis they will counsel women clients who experience these beliefs that can influence their behaviour. Our women must have as much information as possible on abortion, adoption and witchcraft and be confident with the objective answers when counselling them. If their clients are superstitious, they are disempowered. They cannot allow this to happen.

For three exhausting and mind-blowing days we are consumed with discussion and caught in the grip of abortion, adoption and the captivating subjects of witchcraft and witchdoctors. After three solid days they slowly come to look at things differently. Thankfully they are eventually more objective about the sangomas and they can hopefully pass their rational learning on to their clients. Finally the week comes to a close. I am back on track again. Ultimately they realise that God will protect them if they ask for protection from the

greatest Source of Power, a Source far more powerful than a sangoma. And I can thank God for this whole experience discussing sangomas, witchcraft and God.

It has been a hectic week for them and for me. We need to do a relaxation exercise to unwind them after the intense cultural discussion and learning of today. Once they are seated, I ask them to sit quietly and close their eyes. I ask them to listen to the sounds around them, both in class and out in the street. They must listen to their heartbeats and to their breath entering and leaving their bodies. Then they must focus their attention on their feet, legs, tummies, backs, shoulders and heads. All parts of their bodies are separately concentrated on. Are they tired, heavy, sore?

Then they take several big breaths and let them slowly out. I ask them to open their heads up wide and ask God to please pour His love and healing into them until they are filled and surrounded by God's love. Then they close the tops of their heads and fully keep God's love inside of them. When they are ready they open their eyes. The room is very quiet and peaceful.

We spend the next few moments in prayer and in singing our beautiful hymn. The relaxation followed by prayer is just what we all need at the end of today. They fill in their Evaluation Forms and pack up. I pay them for their transport to class as they line up in front of me. I ask them to please be on time in the morning. For the past while some of them arrive late and they should be in class by 9 am. I am not happy when I have to recap for the late comers, or when they miss out on learning. They head off for home with their heads packed full of information. They have learnt and even changed much during this module and 'questions' which they learnt about 'so long ago' will never be the same again.

Journal October 1995

"Witchcraft has been a disconcerting and perplexing subject for me during this past week. I struggled. However, I am slowly getting to know these women in this group. There is so much that I have to teach, and there is a lot for them to learn. Although they are confused at first, they are slowly coming to understand and achieve some success.

It is during the morning go-around that I am beginning to have trouble. When I ask some of them to answer questions that are being recapped they look at me blankly. Then I am anxious and upset and I become sharp with them. I see how upset they become. I just can't help it. They have to know how to counsel properly. I know it is difficult but it is very important.

I have to keep on realising the kind of women I am dealing with. They are not university graduates. Their education has been poor and it has focused on them being disadvantaged citizens. They were educated to remain poor and inferior to whites. Now they have to be pushed to lift themselves up as empowered women, equal to whites.

Because there has been a severe flu epidemic with many absentees I have had to increase the length of this module. I shall not move on until I am satisfied that they are all able to counsel with confidence. Training is moving full steam ahead. There is no choice for them or for me. Fortunately we are making strides."

Most days when we finish class I walk through the inter-leading door to Ikamva Labantu. Often I find the beautifully printed faxes from Peter Biehl asking how we are doing and what work we are busy with. I enjoy having contact with them via Helen's fax machine.

We send faxes back to them telling them that we are fine and that our women are learning many skills. Sometimes the women send messages to them and receive their thanks back. At the end of each module I fax them feedback. We all feel that they are an important part of our team.

Facilitation of Groups

Today I arrive early in class and I unlock the door. The room does not feel empty. It has an early morning atmosphere full of yesterday's group activities. It is an exciting feeling of new learning for a new day. I draw it in deeply. I open our door onto the verandah so that fresh air can circulate.

The women arrive and greet each other. During the go-around we iron out anything that still bothers them. It is crucial to refresh their minds and let the counselling skills become more embedded in their understanding. We take time to listen to some of the difficulties that they still have. They say that it took much concentration to remember the order of using the skills but they say that learning to counsel was extremely valuable.

During this two week module on Support Group training they learn the skill of facilitation. To facilitate they have to remember the skills 'off by heart' including all that they learnt in the counselling module and woman abuse.

Since we started the course three months ago, they have taken my group facilitation for granted. They had no idea that they should watch me and become aware of how I facilitate them. But through my facilitation of our group they now realise how easy it is for me to educate many group members together rather than each individual member on their own. Groups help me to facilitate and provide experiences through each member on how to grow and heal. Interaction through the group saves a facilitator time and repetition of information.

Since their earlier conflict they know that a facilitator is crucial for the successful functioning of our group. Their dispute could have swung both ways and the group could have survived or fallen apart. It took my facilitation to successfully bring the group together again. They have to be more conscious of their own group's dynamics and learn about how their group behaves. There is much that they can learn from our own group's functioning.

To explain group facilitation I decide to use an analogy to clarify their role. I check to see if they know about orchestras and conductors. Some of them do not. I tell them about musical instruments and how the musicians need a conductor to lead them in playing the music. The conductor has to know the music off-by-heart and he makes the musicians practice the work until it is learnt. The conductor stops some instruments from playing, brings others into the music and makes instruments play together. He is the facilitator of the music.

When they facilitate they are like conductors. They must be in control of their support group and lead the group. They have to stand in front of the group and know the work thoroughly so the members can learn everything about abuse. They have to know when to bring the group members into the discussion and stop members who talk too much. Sometimes they repeat parts of the information until it is learnt. To be good facilitators they have to integrate all the knowledge that they have learnt so far, and bring passion into their support groups.

They must make sure that the members know the purpose and the goals of the Support Group. The group's goals are to educate members about abuse and to support and heal each other as abused women. Their facilitator's role must be to build self-esteem and to support their members to overcome their abuse. They must teach their members about respect and to contribute and receive information from each other. Women in their group must not feel that they are 'different' and they must take comfort in knowing that they are not the only women who are abused. There are other women in their position.

As facilitators they have to be aware of their body language and be confident leaders and teachers. They have to learn to treat members of the group differently and learn how to incorporate all of them into the learning process. They may have to manipulate the group at times, for the welfare of the group.

Confidentiality of group information is vital and they must explain this to the group. Their group members have to keep their members' sharings confidential and it cannot leak out. Our group agrees that news travels quickly in the townships. If they fail to keep

information confidential, community women will know that they and the people in their group cannot be trusted. The members will stop attending. If it is the facilitator who breaks confidentiality then she will be held accountable.

They are asked to choose a partner and share what they observe regarding my facilitation. How does it relate to them as facilitators? What do I do? How do I behave? How should they behave? Their thoughts fill the room and they are active and contribute to the discussion. It calms me when they share with each other. Their list is lengthy. They tell me that it is interesting to make sense of how I attend to different people who have different personality types. They also say that they are aware of how I integrate them all into our group.

I ask them if anyone of them feels that I dislike them. They look at each other and look at me and then they all say 'no'. I tell them that they will have to be discrete about their likes or dislikes of any member of their own group and they cannot let their own personal issues of 'like' or 'dislike' influence their actions. If they do, it will impact on the group's behaviour. The members will need to know that each and every one of them is worthy. However, sometimes due to personality reasons a member may dislike the facilitator or may be in a power struggle with her. As facilitators they must know how to take control and bring a level of decorum back to the group. We discuss how without each one of them the group would be different. Each of them is part and parcel of our group. They are all involved in decision-making and direction of the group. Without them we would lose their presence, their stories and their contributions which are important. They agree with me.

Facilitators must incorporate quiet members to become involved in communication with the group. They notice that I encourage quiet members to share with the group. Sometimes we wait until the quiet member participates and then we proceed with the conversation.

The facilitator has to agree to stick to the rules that the group draws up initially. They can make special considerations and change the rules if necessary. We remember how I had to stop our 'set' curriculum and deal with topics that I had not planned for. As facilitators they will have to let the group express themselves because then it becomes a trusted and connective group. The facilitator

cannot always pick and choose the topics and has to be flexible and meet the group's needs.

They notice how tightly the reins of our group are held together. They realise that in this way the group has kept connected to each other. They enjoy the way that they are mixed up with each other in exercises so that they can learn about each other. They also appreciate it when they exchange partners to counsel each other and are counselled by them. They should facilitate the mixing and sharing of information in their support groups.

It is damaging to allow sub-groups and alliances to be formed in groups. They appreciate that I will not allow sub-groups to form in our group. When they run their own groups next year they must be aware of close bonds and ties between members. They will have to break up sub-groups and work to form a unified group bond.

Then they are asked "How important is it for you to ask me a question and I do not answer you correctly"?

They agree that it is very important to give honest answers. They have to know their facts. Sheilla and the women laugh when I remind them of how I still reprimand them for not thinking clearly about the correct answers. I stress this point. As facilitators they have to be accurate with their information on abuse and they cannot give wrong answers.

They remind me of how people cry in our group. When people cry in their support groups they will have to be serious but kind for their client's benefit. They have to be strong enough to allow abused women to become emotional and they will have to contain their tears. It is only in this way that their client's healing can take place.

Today's learning is powerful. I thank them for their important contributions to our discussion. I feel that they need a break in concentration. We need to clean the space and have another exercise that will stimulate them.

First they have to stand on one leg and shake their hands until they feel that their hands will shake off. Then they change legs. Everyone has difficulty standing on one leg and shaking at the same time. They wobble and fall and start again. Again there is lots of laughter. They have fun which breaks the session and I am pleased that they enjoy this activity. It wakes them up.

We get back to work. We talk about what makes members stay in a support group. They admit that if facilitators are not confident in themselves and in their knowledge about abuse, and they have no passion for their work the group will dissolve. They must be confident and courageous as leaders of the group. They have to be lively with a sense of humour and connect relevantly with the abused members. The success or failure of groups depends on the facilitator's control and her approach. Women will want to attend their group if they can integrate facts about abuse and value the contributions of each of the individual members in a respectful way.

As facilitators they must think out of the box to resolve conflicts and disagreements. They agree with me that if the group is not managed properly it can be destructive. They know that conflict can happen at any moment and it can seriously affect the members if things go wrong. There may be times when something happens between members of the group and factions gang up on the other. It is not easy and it is a danger for the group's survival.

The facilitators must bring peace back to the group. They must quieten everyone down and take a deep breath. Diplomacy and sensitivity have to be in place and a difficulty is that they may not be able to resolve the conflict immediately. Conflict takes time to heal and, as they know, it takes some time to get to the bottom of the problem. They must be aware of hidden agendas. This can also damage the functioning of the group.

Then I ask them "What made it difficult for you to participate when you first joined the group"?

They need to feel the vulnerability and the fear of joining a group of people who they do not know and trust. They have to think for a while because it seems so long since they first joined this group. Firstly they say that they noticed the differences in the race, age and language of the members which they did not expect. They did not have friends in the group who they could trust and did not want to share their deepest secrets. They felt isolated when they arrived. Some felt that they were not clever enough to cope with the work. Some felt scared and thought that the other members were cleverer than they were. They also shared that their self-esteem was low and they did not have confidence in themselves.

They are surprised when I tell them that the women in their groups will probably feel as they did. As facilitators it makes them more sensitive and conscious about what new members of a group experience and how they must behave towards them.

Then I ask them “Can you think of yourselves differently since you started coming to our group?”

All of them acknowledge that their self-esteem has built up because they are in this group. For the first time some of them say that they love themselves and I am grateful and surprised when Caroline and Sheilla share this with the group. It is the knowledge that they acquire about themselves and the way that they use it in their lives so they can say they are proud of themselves for their courage to continue with this difficult course. They are happy that they have learnt so much about themselves and their colleagues. I tell them that they must hope that the members of their groups will share the same sentiments.

They agree that by sharing thoughts with others they learn that there are many people who are abused and ashamed of the abuse. Most abused women blame themselves for being abused. The members must learn how to stop self-blame. Facilitators have to boost their member’s self-esteem and value them for standing up for themselves. Our group feels comfortable to break down the shame that they have always felt by being abused.

They know that there will be different abused people joining their groups. Their members will be young and old, talkative and quiet. Members must be given the confidence to speak out courageously in the group and speak about their own private lives. Their sharing with others will contribute towards their healing.

Noxolo recounts how she did something that is not acceptable in their Xhosa culture. She shared intimate information with older people when she came to our group. She shared with Lulu who is almost as old as her grandmother and Lulu shared with her. In our group Noxolo has learnt not to be afraid of sharing and she has learnt a lot from Lulu and the older members of our group. When they facilitate next year they must encourage members of all ages to share with each other.

Most importantly, as facilitators they must not make promises to their clients that they cannot keep. This breaks trust and members do not feel secure. They must encourage their members to also keep their promises. The facilitator must encourage them in the best way to communicate. They must be honest, respectful, committed and caring. When they speak or listen to each other they should be encouraged to say “please and thank you”. At the end of the support group sessions their own members must be able to say to them “We do not blame ourselves anymore. Our self-esteem and belief in ourselves has grown because of you”. Then they will know that they have facilitated their groups successfully.

We are reminded that our strength is that we know, our weakness is that we forget, and we need to be reminded. They say that this ‘mantra’ will be one that they will repeat over the length of the course, and beyond. Even when they forget the answers, they will know that their strength is that they know and they will remind themselves of what they have forgotten.

These are important questions to ask and it is a fruitful discussion. For the first time they have to think seriously about the group’s personal importance to them and their roles as facilitators.

It has been a long day and today they have become aware of a whole amount of information of which they were previously unaware of. I am grateful for the sharing that they have brought into the group. I am also grateful for their facilitation skills that they are starting to acquire. It is such an easy day for me. They all carry their weight.

Today they must become aware of the difficult members who can make up their support groups. On foolscap paper I write down types of personalities. I write the ‘Quiet member’, ‘Teacher’s pet or Favourite’, the ‘Joker’, ‘Big Talker’, ‘Know All’, ‘Bossy Boots’, ‘Argumentative Member’, ‘Moody or Passive Aggressive Member’ and ‘Sensitive or Indignant Member’. And lastly I write about members who keep Hidden Agendas.

They need to know that quiet people are in a powerful position. They hear the other members’ stories and they do not share their own. This is also relevant because of confidentiality. Quiet members take in information and give little information back. As facilitators

they will have to listen carefully for their quiet members' interactions in their groups and encourage them to share.

Then we talk about the 'Favourite' or 'Teacher's pet', these are members who need to be close to the facilitator and feel important. They agree that as their facilitator I do not allow members to become too close to me. And they cannot allow themselves to become too close to members and be manipulated by them either.

Then we talk about 'Jokers'. They realise that jokers get their attention by making jokes that are sometimes funny but are usually not funny. They share that a joker in the group might mean that the person is insecure and needs and wants attention from the group. Others share that at times the joker can be helpful by breaking the seriousness of the topic of abuse and make them laugh. We encourage humour. Maybe there will be someone who becomes silly too often and this disturbs the other members of the group. Then the facilitator has to watch the joker carefully and 'ground' her. Our women do not think that there will be jokers in their group but they do not know. If there is one they must know how to handle her.

We discuss the 'Big Talker'. We laugh because we know that we have some Big Talkers in our own group. They are strong members who demand attention. They want to do a lot of the talking and do not allow others to participate. These members focus attention on themselves, and the rest of the group does not appreciate it. If Big Talkers take control, I point out that the facilitator must ask other members if they have similar experiences to the Big Talker and share the focus. Sometimes I remind them that when I ask a question I will not allow the Big Talkers to speak. I do not look at the Big Talkers and I focus my attention on the quieter members of the group. They may have to ignore the Big Talker for the interests of the group.

We talk about a 'Know-All'. A Know-All likes to show off their knowledge. The facilitator has to ask specific members of the group if they agree with what the 'Know-All' shares. I remind them that I do not take constant replies from members who know all the answers. As facilitators they will need to ask the members who do not readily share information so that the 'Big' Talkers' and 'Know-Alls' do not take offence.

Then they discuss the 'Bossy Member' of the group who can also rock the boat. It is difficult for a facilitator to handle a bossy person who wants to take control of the group and boss the other members. However I tell them that as facilitators they are really in the power position and they have to mediate the situation. They cannot let the Bossy person know what they think of her. They thank the Bossy member for her contribution but let her know that other members have the choice to do it their way.

Then we address the 'Argumentative and Aggressive' person who doesn't know how to communicate with other members in the group courteously. I ask them "How would you deal with this kind of member"? Firstly our women say that aggression and arguments can dismantle their group quickly. They must not let a person interfere with the group's harmony and they must address the problem immediately. The women then suggest that they must find out if anyone has done something to hurt or annoy her and they must try to fix the problem. They agree that most of the abused women in their group will probably be non-assertive. But there are abused women who are aggressive. They agree that aggressive behaviour does not sit comfortably with members of the group.

If a member continually argues I suggest that they, as facilitators, may ask the member to see her privately and talk to her. If she tries to become manipulative, and she does not accept that her behaviour is inappropriate, they will have to ask her to leave the group. It is unfortunate if this has to happen but they agree that as facilitators they will not be able to continue to work if they have an aggressive, argumentative member in the group.

How would they deal with a 'Moody' member who is a passive-aggressive member? They believe that a moody member is also manipulative. It is a plan of theirs to disrupt the group. They share that they need to ask her what is bothering her. Moody members of a group can divide the group into two factions. They can be destructive as they draw people's attention to them. Moody members can use silence to gain attention.

They say that 'Sensitive' members are self-absorbed and manipulative. The group does not appreciate them. They have sensitive 'spots'. Sometimes a sensitive member can have a high

opinion of herself and take what others say personally and get upset or angry while other times someone can say something to a sensitive member and not know that it is hurtful. The group says that the facilitator should point out the hurtful issue and try and resolve it between the two members. In our group we try to use humour.

A big negative for everyone in the group is a member who 'Keeps Hidden Agendas'. They know that we do not have hidden agendas at Mosaic. Hidden agendas are a huge big NO. When an issue arises and people are not honest with each other it causes real damage. I talk of hidden agendas as being 'grit in a wheel'. The wheel cannot turn smoothly and chaos will result.

Most importantly they are asked "How can you pick up and resolve a hidden agenda?"

They tell me that the group will pick up that there is something wrong but they may not want to expose it to the facilitator because they feel that they will cause 'trouble'. They know that people who are engaged in keeping agendas hidden are obstructing the proper functioning of the group.

To pick up a hidden agenda they talk about being very sensitive to the group's behavior and the feeling that something is 'wrong'. A hidden agenda can uncover something that someone has done or said or it could be in a relationship that is experiencing difficulties in the group. They say that when they know what is hidden both sides of the story have to be listened to. Members have to be heard without other members of the group supporting them or working against them. The sooner the truth is out the better it is for the group. Facilitators have to find out what the real cause of the problem is and deal with the differences immediately because ultimately the group will suffer and it can destroy a group's unity. They say that members who keep hidden agendas are dishonest, disrespectful and have something to hide. If they find out about hidden agendas in their support group they must immediately uncover the issue sensitively even if it may cause hurt and disruption to members of the group.

I tease them by saying that unfortunately it is usually the facilitator who is the last to know about hidden agendas. They all laugh because they know that the group sometimes knows what is

being 'hidden' and I do not. I always have to be aware of what is happening but sometimes it is not easy.

At times the facilitator has to challenge member's negative views and attitudes. She has to observe them, listen and confront when necessary. She has to bring peace and reassurance to the group so that they are able to share stories comfortably and grow. Ultimately she is a binding force to educate and empower abused members emotionally and help them in their healing.

They are realising that support group facilitation is grounded in working with many different people with their own problems and complications. They know that it is difficult to keep everyone happy in a group and they realise it is a responsible task to be a facilitator.

It is Friday morning and it is day ten of Support Group work. The last section of this module is almost finished. They are surprised. They say that they have learnt so many skills and they have grown so much. For me it is almost unbelievable to have come this far successfully.

Finally today they are trained in the three stages of Support Group work - Beginning the Group, the Central Task Stage and Termination. They have the knowledge and skills of facilitation but they have to be trained how to strategically run their groups.

In the Beginning Stage of the Support Group they must introduce themselves as the group's leader and introduce the members to each other. It is probably the first time that the group members are in a group with other abused women. It is good to be slow and informal and relax everyone in the group. They must be confident in their introduction so that members feel comfortable

I ask them "How can you show your confidence?"

They talk about all the verbal and non-verbal skills that they learnt earlier. I tell them that it is also encouraging to introduce a little humour. As in our group, humour relaxes us when we smile and laugh together. With a few encouraging words the facilitators can make a comment about how most of them are probably feeling worried about being in the group, or anxious about who they can trust by sharing their personal stories. In this way the sessions will be open, honest and meaningful.

They must then assess the group keenly from the beginning. They must assess their personalities that start to emerge from the group. Member's expectations need to be written down onto a piece of foolscap paper explaining what they want to achieve, what they hope to gain and what are their fears and anxieties.

In this Beginning stage they must make Ground Rules to which everyone has to agree. The first rule must be to keep everything confidential and this should help the members to feel safe and secure to be in the group. The ground rules should be recorded on foolscap paper.

The Central Task Stage involves the structuring and running of the Support Group. The facilitators design the size of the group, how many times it will meet and the different weekly topics for which that they will have to prepare. They have to know their subject matter and be properly prepared for the learning and teaching about abuse. It is also important to listen to the member's sharing and pick up points that can be discussed further.

We discuss how the size of the group will often change mid-stream as women drop out. Some women cannot always be there. They know that running a support group in the townships is not an easy task. Although women have so much work to attend to and a support group is a luxury for them, it is always important to run the group even if there is only a portion of the original group attending. Everyone who attends some or all of the sessions will gain something useful from them. They should not encourage members to join the group after it has started.

They must highlight for the members about the beginning and end times of the sessions. We all know that punctuality of the members is important. It is disruptive when they come late because they miss information and it disturbs the group.

They must also decide on the amount of weeks that the group will run for. I suggest that they should meet once a week for six to eight weeks. It then gives the members time to get to know each other, gain confidence and share their real stories with the group.

Then they must decide which topics they must present. For an abused women's group they can draw their topics mostly from their modules on Women Abuse and Assertiveness Training. Each topic

can build on the previous topics. They must decide which methods they can use to co-ordinate the learning. They need to guide the members and keep them focused on the topics. They must explore the deeper meaning of abuse and of their feelings. If the discussion becomes disrupted they must try and bring it back to the topic.

Finally there is the Termination stage where they have to understand what termination means to members of the group. They have already shared their painful stories of abuse and got to know and trust each other in the group. There may be resistance to termination. For members it is not easy and neither is it easy for the facilitator.

How will they feel when we finally terminate our group? From the end of this year they will not be meeting with me every day. It is a surprising thought for them because they are involved intensely in the training. They mostly deny thinking that their training will end. They do not seem pleased with the thought of termination.

They need to discuss how they would terminate their group satisfactorily. I divide them into pairs. My question is "How will you prepare your support group members to confront and deal with the termination of their group?"

Their answers will be based on putting themselves into their members' uncomfortable shoes. They report back that many emotions will surface and they have to talk about feelings. They believe that their members should not leave the group with anger, frustrations or disappointment. When their group realises that they will not meet regularly they could become angry and emotional. They must understand and support their members when they express their feelings. They say that there will probably be sadness and they will feel their loss of support. There might also be anxiety and fear where they think that they cannot cope on their own.

They may be like our group members who may even deny that the group is ending. The facilitators will have to keep reminding them that there are two or three more sessions remaining. They may become angry or lose their feelings of self-esteem. The members may feel that they did not receive enough information or were not helped sufficiently. These are all part and parcel of the termination stage and

they should understand that this will happen. It all has a lot to do with the members' feelings about 'saying goodbye'.

During the last sessions it is time for the facilitator to introduce hopeful questions. She can ask them if they feel stronger than at the beginning of the group. Are they strong enough to survive their abuse? How will they cope? Will they need counselling after the group ends?

Our group are fortunate that we shall continue our relationships with each other when I supervise their practice in their communities next year. Members of their groups will not. Some groups will naturally drift to an end, but members of most groups will not want to part with each other. Members will build up relationships and it will be difficult to terminate the group.

Before the group ends I remind them to show the members their 'expectations' written down when they started the group. The members will realise that they have achieved and learnt a significant amount about abuse and about themselves. It can hopefully make a positive difference to the way they live their lives.

At the end the members can express their feelings towards each other. It is good to round off the group in this way. Some of them will be able to maintain their friendships after the group has ended but many will not. A big group hug gives the feeling of support from the group and the facilitator.

We are all excited to have finished another module. Our group of trainees have homework for the weekend. When they break to go home, I know that they are happy that this module has been completed. And I am relieved and excited. We are making definite tracks in their training.

Journal October 1995

"Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that this course would turn out as it has. I don't think that I ever realised what it would be like. Gee whizz, I was a teacher of young kids not a trainer of adults.

These are women who live in the most deprived and dangerous areas of Cape Town, who have had very little and inferior schooling and who always wanted to better themselves. I just went into it because I knew that was what I was 'going to do'. I didn't have any idea of the dynamics or of the incredible power of the

experience. I didn't know how these women would respond. I think that I just thought abstractly that it would prepare women academically and even the word 'empower' was only a word in a way. Well, it is virtually indescribable. In fact when I tell people about it, I search for words because I don't know where to begin!

Helen often brings visitors who come into the class to meet the women. We then welcome them into our circle with song. And my women all speak about the training, why they wanted to do it, what they have gained and learnt so far. Everyone has been so impressed.

Of course there hasn't been too much money but we know that this will come when it is ready for us to receive it. This is God's organisation. Please God help us!!

We have just finished the sixth module of the course! Presentations and Workshops won't be too difficult because they have many skills that they can use during these modules. Now they just have to learn their work off by heart. That should be interesting!"

Porno Sexuality and Marketing

The women all arrive in class and get ready for today's lessons. We are going to start the module on Running Educational Events, known to me as Presentations. I have my worksheets ready and we are prepared to proceed.

While they greet each other and sort themselves out, I tell them that I have to leave class for a few minutes. I must speak to Helen and I want to send a fax about our work to the Biehls. I ask them to start their go-around and to ask each other questions about Support Groups and the work that we did in the last module. I leave Caroline in charge. Everything seems fine as I go through our inter-leading door into the offices of Ikamva Labantu.

I say hello to Angela and she asks me to help her with a meeting for their women at Ikamva sometime next week. I tell her that I will be able to help her. I find Helen in her office. Helen readily agrees to send the fax and says it is a pleasure to help us. We talk briefly about her women and what is happening in Ikamva and I tell her about our women and what we are achieving in Mosaic. Helen and I are proud of our work within the different communities and I am pleased that we are friends.

The Biehls always want to know what our women are learning about and today I want to let them know that we are doing wonderfully well and we have just finished Support Group work. I quickly write a short note for Evelyn, Helen's receptionist, to fax. Then I proceed to our room.

When I open the door I find everyone bunched excitedly together in the middle of the room. Everyone is leaning towards one another and visibly shaking with laughter. It sounds like naughty laughter to me. They are stunned to see me back so quickly and they look embarrassed and nervous. I am shocked because they are supposed to be doing revision of Support Group work. Now I am curious and suspicious.

They quickly rush to their chairs and sit looking uncomfortable. Some look down at the floor. They avoid my eyes and cover their blushing faces with hands and scarves. Lulu our grandmother looks at me with eyes as big as saucers, peeping out from behind her scarf.

I want to know what is so funny. I am aware that they are trying to hide something from me but they do not want to share. I ask what happened to their go-around that they were going to start when I left the room. I remind them of no hidden agendas. I want to know what is going on. I stand still and I keep quiet and wait.

Gloria eventually stands up and sheepishly gives me a magazine. It is a pornographic magazine. I should have known that it was Gloria again. Our beautiful young Gloria. She brings pornography into class to show and 'to shock' the women and she certainly does.

No one wants to look at me paging through the magazine. Even I am shocked by the pictures. It is a Playboy magazine banned in South Africa and I have no idea where Gloria got it from. It is full of women with full frontal nudity, big breasts and exposed buttocks. No wonder the women find it outrageous and shocking. They have never seen pictures of nudity and certainly not of nude white women.

Although I am amused I cannot laugh out loud. But it is really funny. It is brave and courageous of Gloria to bring the pornographic magazine into class. For me their facilitator, their behaviour is equally funny. They are like mischievous children who are caught by their parent exposing something naughty that they should not be doing. They are worried that I will be angry with them and they think they will be punished.

I immediately turn to them and say that I am very pleased that Gloria brought the magazine into class today. They are stunned and surprised by my reaction. They view me with suspicion. They cannot believe that they will get away with this. I do not want to discharge and dismiss what has been brought into class. I do not want to turn pornography into a dirty and secretly exciting happening. I want it to be a serious learning experience. Again our lessons have to stop. I have to take advantage of the opportunity to talk to them about sex and sexuality.

Pornography – no less. My unruffled response towards them allows them to settle down, relax and listen to me. I ask them what

our stand is going to be on pornography. We discuss our views that there are women who sell their bodies and who also make money from nude photography. They may have these women as clients one day. How are they going to serve them when they work in the community?

As community workers they agree that it is essential that we treat our clients non-judgmentally at all times. We have to focus on the person as a child of God and help that client to help herself to make her life easier and happier. This must be irrespective of who she is, who her partner is and what her sexual job and orientation happens to be.

This discussion leads them into asking questions about sexual orientation. The discussion ranges from homo-sexuality, hetero-sexuality, bi-sexuality, transvestites and sex changes. I also have to contain myself and not react to their constant bursts of nervous laughter. Good heavens. I did not think that I would ever discuss sexual orientation during this training course. How did I ever get into this?

They want to discuss the whole gamut of sexual activities. They want to know it all. I have to try not to blush as I explain about orgasm. Some of them do not know what an orgasm is. And by now there is outright laughter in the group especially as I am caught unaware. I try to explain orgasm to them in words and actions, kind of like 'when Harry met Sally'. It is very funny but I have to control them from letting the subject get out of hand.

They have never before had the opportunity or the courage to talk to anyone about these issues. And certainly not with a white woman. They cannot get enough of it. Their questions tumble out in total fascination whilst they earnestly lean in towards me with elbows on their knees, chins in their hands and brains working overtime. Always bubbling with sideways glances and more or less of their suppressed laughter.

I have to give them a whole biology lesson because they cannot work out how lesbians can make love and have an orgasm. There is so much laughter and hysteria when we discuss these taboo subjects. I do not mind and I am surprisingly not embarrassed. As long as valuable learning comes through it is key to have these discussions.

Most important of all are their opinions and feelings regarding their lesbian clients. I am intrigued to see who in the group still feels homosexual orientation is wrong. Some of them feel that it is wrong because of their religion and how the Bible says that it is wrong. This of course gets us onto the subject of religion and the Bible. We discuss how religious men over the centuries have interpreted the Bible to suit their own ends. I ask if God or Man has had a hand in shaping religion and religious practices.

Until a year ago in South Africa the church justified and entrenched Apartheid by interpreting what is written in the Bible. And now that we have a democracy and Apartheid is 'over' how come the church does not refer to the Bible to still support their views? Was the Bible a powerful and useful tool for the church to use in the suppression of 'non-whites' in our country? They agree that it was. I ask them especially in terms of women and women's rights. I ask if women can take positions of authority in the church and I ask if this is written in the Bible. I point out how the Muslim Koran allows men to have more than one wife. I tell them that in the Jewish religion polygamy, taking two wives, is banned and both the Bible and the Jewish Torah forbid it. All are God's holy books. Which one is right?

I ask them "Does the church support a woman who wants to divorce her husband even if he is dangerous and abusive to her"?

They all answer that there are huge problems created by priests and the church for a woman to get a divorce. For the church, marriage is binding and they tell me that abused women are constantly sent back to their homes by their priests and told to 'try harder'.

We speak about homosexuality in the church and I tell them about the movie which I have just seen and all the hypocrisy portrayed in the movie. We speak about how the church forbids Catholic priests to have relationships with women, forbids gay relationships in the priesthood and forbids lesbian relationships between nuns. Yet the reality is that these people are still secretly practicing their homo-sexual orientation in the church.

We speak about gay rights and people who want relationships with people of the same sex. The church forbids this interaction and

gay people are not welcome in the church. Homosexuality is not a sickness. These gay men and lesbian women are not born identifying with their gender and sexual bodies. I ask my women if they believe that they are surely still God's children. They all answer 'yes'.

My women think carefully about what we have been discussing. I think that for all of them the church is a holy place and they will obviously continue to attend church services. As future community leaders they are surprised at the information that we have been discussing. It is important to open their minds and think for themselves, accept their own thoughts and have respect for 'others' in society, the others who are ostracised by people in our communities.

Religion and sexual orientation? This is an intense discussion. It has taken a great deal of time and we have to proceed with our module on Presentations.

I ask them to stand up, jump, turn and hop, and jump again. When I feel that they have let go of their pent-up energy I ask them to stop and sit down. We are ready to begin our new module.

Journal 1995

"Today I realised that I'll never know what hides behind the next corner. It just jumps out and hits me! I must be careful about leaving the classroom. Ha! The last time I visited Helen during class I had to resolve their conflict! Again they surprised me this morning.

But the experience was amazing. I enjoyed educating them about things that I never thought I would be able to cope with. Educating black and coloured women about Sex! Heavens! I wonder what my family will think!

I also proved to myself that when I am caught off-guard I rise to the occasion and produce something worthwhile. I suppose I could have brushed off and dismissed the pornography that Gloria showed to the women, but from somewhere 'other than myself' I was able to turn it into something significantly worthwhile. Today through Gloria's cheeky and daring behaviour the women really gained considerable information! Ha!

It was interesting to hear their initial opinions on sexuality and how they shaped one another's thinking. During the long debate I was excited to see how we were able to shift rigid thinking and open their minds to other possibilities. The more conservative women were beginning to think in a much more liberal

way. Then, because of all the sharing they were able to realise that we can't judge others and must accept different lifestyles for what they are."

I let them know that in this module on Running Educational Events or Presentations, they have to gain the skills necessary to educate adults. They have already covered the Modules on Women Abuse and Facilitation and if they know their skills then they will become effective educators.

We chant another of our Mosaic mantras which will be the secret of our success: "We do not sit behind closed doors. We go out to people who live in the community and where we deliver our free services on abuse in the language that they understand."

Their ultimate aim must be to give information about abuse so that abused women's lives can change. Teaching them about abuse will help them identify with their position. Then they must find practical ways for these women to set about change.

Before starting their presentations they have to find abused women to present their material to. The easiest way is to find people who congregate in community venues. They say that they can educate in their churches where their priests can give them permission to present. They can present to their Mother's Unions.

They can educate in public venues such as hospitals and clinics where people wait for doctors and nurses. They discuss how they can educate them while they patiently wait for medical attention. If it is to be in a hospital or clinic we shall have to get permission from the District Manager of the Department of Health to present there. I know that it is difficult because of the government's rules and regulations. But we are becoming excited about going into public venues and will have to make an effort to get their permission to present in the hospitals.

Before they start to educate about abuse they should have the whole presentation in their minds. How will they behave as presenters? What skills will they have to use? What information must they pass on to their adult audience? What place will they decide to present in?

They need to judge how long it should take. In public venues like hospitals it should be short and to the point. This is because many

women will not be able to listen to the whole presentation. Hospitals are busy and patients have their names called out to collect their files, to see the doctors, and they move in and out of the venue. In private venues a presentation is more beneficial for participants. It is more intimate and it can take longer.

We read about how Popular Education began with Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator and philosopher who educated the poorest of the poor in Brazil. This was so successful that it allowed his students to transform themselves by regaining their own sense of humanity and overcoming their conditions. It liberated people and made them creative and responsible members of society.

In Popular Education the educator and the adult learners ask questions and are actively involved in their learning. The class agrees that we often use the popular method in our classroom learning. They do not think that they will be able to educate adults using the Popular Method in a crowded, busy and noisy venue. It will have to be the Lecture Method of educating where they stand in front of their audience and educate them. I suggest that they can and should combine the Popular Method of education and the Lecture Method of education.

The group is asked to brainstorm why the lecture method is useful as an educational method. They say that it is usually one person educating to a group of people and giving information in a short space of time. They can give a lot of information very quickly. When they educate adults in public venues they will use the Lecture Method because of the circumstances in which they present. I say it must not be long and boring.

In the Popular Method of education adults learn by communicating and identifying, by asking and answering questions. Their attention has to be maintained for learning to take place. Their material must be relevant for adults. If it is not relevant it will not be meaningful and they will not pay attention. When they educate about abuse they can actively involve their adults by asking questions about the different kinds of abuse and why women stay in abusive relationships. Their ideas will flow freely between them. They will learn from each other.

Then they are asked how they should introduce themselves as presenters and educators. They agree that they must first introduce themselves and say that they are Mosaic community workers. Then they briefly advertise the services that Mosaic offers to women who are abused so that they know about Mosaic and our services.

They say that their voices must be loud and clear especially when they are presenting in a venue such as in noisy and busy clinics or hospitals. We confirm that their verbal and non-verbal skills need to be confidently assertive and their self-esteem must be high. They cannot be 'high and mighty'. To present with dignity, they have to be informed and assertive, but humble.

They know that they have to prepare and organise their materials beforehand such as the summaries of abuse, flashcards with the different kinds of abuse written onto them or the map of the Cycle of Abuse. They must make a summary from the Woman Abuse module so that they can be reminded of what follows next. Things have to flow freely when they educate people in the audience. They cannot afford to stop or hesitate because it will disturb the concentration and attention of the adults. The audience will think they are unprepared and that they do not know much about their subject. They will stop listening to them.

In addition they, the presenters, must be sensitive to the audience. When standing in front of their audience they must show that they are strong role models and sources of inspiration for abused women. They must endorse 'woman power' and be proud to talk to abused women in their audiences and be supportive of them.

We discuss that the best way to educate adults is to talk honestly. The more that they can learn from a presentation on abuse, the more beneficial it will be for abused women. Like a ripple effect these abused women can educate everyone else in their private lives. The women who do not have the confidence and courage to change their life situations will listen to them educating others, and over time they will remember the knowledge that they gained. They can still change their lives for the better. Nothing is wasted on anyone in a presentation.

They must practice in front of family or friends so that their first public experience is not so difficult. Everyone decides who they can

present their public education on abuse to. It will be their homework. I let them know that they will have to present to their colleagues in class but they discuss how they can also present to others as well.

Then I ask: “What can personally undermine you and test your authority in front of a large group of people?”

They are not sure of the answer. I then share that in community venues they could have abusive men in their audience, men who will likely be confrontational and conservative. They agree that in the clinics and hospitals there will be men listening to them. They all agree that no Xhosa woman has been brave enough to tell Xhosa men how they need to behave towards their women.

This, however, is what they will have to do. Men accept that they have the power and control in relationships and what they do to their women has nothing to do with anyone else. It can be difficult for them to present when Xhosa men react to what they are trying to teach. It will be interesting to see if there are any brave women in their audience who will stand up to the men who confront them. If women confront men, it will be positive feedback for them supporting the teaching that they are conducting.

It is nerve-wracking for them to speak out confidently about the subject of ‘abuse’ because it is still ‘taboo’ and surrounded with a ‘stigma’ and women are ashamed of being abused. Talking about abuse makes women feel nervous and humiliated and it is especially scary to talk to a mixed audience in a public venue but I stress that they need to stand their ground and discuss abuse, and abusive men have to deal with it. They should be unafraid to do it. As presenters, they have to educate those who abuse and those who are abused. Abuse is abuse. It is unacceptable.

They discuss how they will feel as insecure and inexperienced educators standing alone with all eyes focused on them in front of a large unknown audience. It can be overwhelming but they must not show it. The audience will sense that they are scared. This is especially true if they are not prepared for their presentations. I reassure them that if they really know their subject, and they are confident, they will succeed. The more they present to clients the better they will become. The looks on their faces show me that they do not believe me. I

assure them that at the end of this module they will be amazing educators.

They discuss how they would respond to an unfriendly and insecure educator. What if she is confused, distant and detached from them and also from the material that she is presenting? They say that they will not respect her because she is uninformed about abuse, is unfriendly and does not relate to them. They cannot feel secure with her or listen to muddled up information that she is trying to convey. They say that they will be restless, unenthusiastic and unfriendly towards her. They will be angry with her for confusing them and wasting their time.

Then I ask “Will you listen to her if she is friendly and she presents her knowledge confidently to you?”

They agree that they will be happy to listen to her. I emphasise how important it is for them to always be warm, friendly and knowledgeable. Adult learners always feel more comfortable when they have a presenter who is confident, knows the material, can answer their questions and make them feel special and respected.

In our Handout we read examples of pretentious language which presenters sometimes use. ‘High and mighty’ language will stop the audience from understanding them. They need to be ‘down to earth’ and use the language of the people. They have to put themselves into their audience’s position and ‘listen’ to themselves presenting. Social Work language is too sophisticated and will make it difficult for their clients to understand.

They are reminded of how often I translate language into simple sentences for them. Sometimes I unpack concepts to get the real meaning across. How they would feel if I did not explain difficult words and jargon to them and if I used language that they did not understand? They tell me it will be difficult for them. They will be frustrated and distracted and they will not learn anything new.

We all thoroughly enjoy these interactions in the class. They absorb, respond and contribute to the conversation and we carry on with the learning. Our bonds strengthen and increase. We all admit that we are the lucky ones. It really is give and give.

I let them know that we shall do many role plays during this module and they will get the opportunity to present the information

to us in class. In order to become skilful educators and presenters the class will give them feedback. They seem nervous to perform but they are encouraged to do the role plays in front of their colleagues.

It is Friday afternoon and they have a large amount of homework to complete for this weekend. I ask them to look over the Woman Abuse module to get all their information about abuse and to relearn the skills from their Counselling and Support Group modules. They will have to know the information and skills taught during the module on Workshops and know how, when and where to use them.

On Monday morning the go-around is difficult for those who are still confused. Although they promised they would have all the information that I need, the go-around is tough. I know that it is a lot to keep in mind and especially to incorporate the information from the past modules already completed. A few of the women who are slow and uncertain push me. They scare me because they will soon be Mosaic's representatives. Our reputation is fundamentally crucial if we are going to survive in the community.

When we have finished revising the homework, Gloria ask if she can share something with us. She says that she has to tell us that she is leaving Mosaic. Her mother who does charity work in her community of Masiphumelele, wants her to come and work with her. She tells us that it has taken a long time for her to come to this decision about leaving and she will miss all of us. But today she is definitely taking her leave of Mosaic. We are all shocked. Gloria has been a good student and she has brought important issues into the group.

In our go-around everyone says how fond they are of her and will miss her a lot. We wish her good luck and hope that the skills that she has learnt from Mosaic will stand her in good stead. I tell her that I shall miss her and the discussions that she has brought into Mosaic. We all laugh about the sex and sexuality brought into our group by Gloria. We let her know that whenever she wants to touch base with us we are happy for her to do this. We all hug her and she decides to leave after the go-around. We sadly say goodbye.

After Gloria has left the classroom we take some time to discuss what her leaving Mosaic means to our group. There is general agreement that the remaining women will not leave Mosaic and will

stay to the end. Our group is growing smaller with the loss of Vanessa, Rina and now Gloria. But they are ten women with skills and purpose and no one else wants to leave Mosaic. I am relieved.

We all settle down and begin to concentrate. Today I am preparing for the group to learn about networking for their first time in the community. They will spread the news about Mosaic to various service providers and key role models. They will visit priests, principals, clinics, hospitals, doctors, police and community organisations. They will share our services with them about the abuse of women and girls and how we can help them. In networking around the community they will not focus on information about abuse but they will focus on introducing Mosaic as a new NGO, and how Mosaic can assist the community if they know of women who are abused. In networking they will have to be confident when they are asked questions about Mosaic.

They are asked to tell us who they will be visiting in their own communities. They have a few minutes to think and tell us the names of people and organisations. They share that they are not very confident but they know where they hope to visit. They have information about Mosaic and they all know about the services that Mosaic will provide. We proceed to practice their networking presentations with a colleague, especially about introducing themselves. It is not easy to visit community people who they respect and do not know, and when they feel insecure.

I ask them “How will you feel when you arrive at your destination? Do you know how you will introduce yourself? Do you know what you will say? Will you feel confident about presenting Mosaic?”

We continue with the ritual of introduction. Having chosen their colleague and the person who they are going to visit they ‘knock on the door’. When they hear the person answer they open the door. They introduce themselves by saying “Good morning, my name is ... I am a community worker from Mosaic, a new organisation that deals with abuse. Please can I speak to you for a moment?”

If the person agrees to speak to them, they sit down. Then they continue “Mosaic is a new organisation that provides services for abused women and girls. Can I tell you about Mosaic’s services that

we offer to abused women? If you know any abused women we will appreciate it if you can share our contact details with them.”

When they are finished practising with their colleague they practice several times in front of the class. They introduce themselves, explain Mosaic’s services and ask if they can work together with this person. Their presentations must be short and clear.

It is important to start from the beginning because they have not done anything like this before. As they continually practice they gain confidence. They agree that it is very helpful to learn from each other’s skills. By the time that they are fluent and ready, I feel certain that they will be assets to Mosaic during their networking interviews.

Now I ask them all to stand up in front of their chairs. They are symbolically standing at their ‘front doors’ with their handbags under their arms. They are going to ‘step out’ physically to be Mosaic community workers and to present Mosaic. It is a scary but joyful moment for them. They say that they are now ready to network.

The following day they network from two to six organisations and people in their communities. All told, they visit thirty nine resources and they are proud of themselves. I am very happy that they have started marketing Mosaic in the community. They truly enjoy educating and sharing news about our new kid on the block.

In class they say that they are thrilled. They share with us that they told the community people about Mosaic and about what we are doing. With few exceptions the people who they approach are enthusiastic. They say that our women can use their facilities when they do their fieldwork next year. All of the service providers agree that abuse is a huge problem and are happy to have our help.

Jean is thrilled with her visit to the principal of a school. She says he is very interested and helpful. There are many abused girls at the school. Some of the service providers such as the police are not so enthusiastic. They say that they already refer abused women to NGOs in their own community. I ask Lulu if it was the police officers in Gugulethu who said this and Lulu says ‘yes’. I realise that it is Nondomiso who does not want Mosaic operating in ‘her’ territory. Nomdomiso has no choice as we are going to offer services in Gugulethu if she wants us to or not.

For the rest of this week we practice information from the Abuse Module. They each present to their colleagues. Some need to regain their skills learnt in their previous modules and are less confident than the others. It seems to be quite slow to get them back to speed. We give feedback to those who are confident and they are an example to their colleagues as to how they should present. We praise them and ask others to repeat the process of what they have observed. As each person gets up to present to the class, the repetition helps them gain courage and perfect their skills.

It is not an easy week for everyone. There has been so much work to learn and so many skills to perfect. For me it is such a relief that this module is finished and we can move onto our next module of how to run Workshops.

Journal October 1995

"I am relieved that we are stepping out of our classroom and practicing networking in the field. They performed well and visited so many people who don't know about us. Next year I'll accompany them to do presentations in the community. Now they have people who will know about Mosaic.

This whole presentation module was a difficult one for them to come to grips with. There was so much to think about and remember from their previous modules. Now they have to put together their skills and use all that they have learnt and practiced to run their workshops. The presentations had to flow from one part to another. Their body language had to be right and they had to stand straight and not fiddle. They had to be able to answer all the questions put to them. Our women had such fun asking them questions about how men abuse their women.

We did many role-plays before they met the standards that I want from them. But we struggled along and we stretched the module until I was comfortable with their performances. We have all decided that these skills need to be brushed up.

My daughter Martine suggests that we practice at regular intervals from now until the end of the course and into next year when they do the practical application of their skills. I agree with her. It is generally a good idea for their self-esteem and confidence".

Time Is Running Out

I cannot believe that it is the beginning of November. We are experiencing one of the last important modules called Workshops. We still have the Organisational, Leadership and Evaluation module to complete. Time is running out and I wonder how I will finish these modules in one month's time. It gives me a huge headache.

On the morning of the first day I share about the modules that we still have to complete. They are as shocked as I am. We cannot believe that this year is almost ended. We have run out of time. Soon they will write exams.

The other Modules are important but when I look through the original worksheets I am relieved. There is a large amount that they have already completed. They largely know what it means to have leadership skills and they know something about evaluation and organising. Fortunately they know a lot about social work skills and methods of working so there is not much more that they will have to study. The most important thing about the Workshop Module is that they have to learn everything off by heart as well as the methods used with presentations. However next year there is time to go over the work when they do their practical application of services in the community.

Workshops will be a service that they will often run for clients. It will empower abused women through their own participation and by sharing their own personal experiences. In order for clients to change their attitudes towards themselves and towards their abusers, the leaders of the workshops have to ask personal questions and the group has to answer at all times. Workshops will give abused women time to share their stories and touch on their painful emotions of abuse. They will have to use the different methods for integrating the information in workshops.

Their practice of workshop skills takes place in class and their colleagues are the best critiques. The repetition of this work is bumpy at the beginning of this module. It really is not easy and they give

great feedback to each other. Apart from the work on abuse they need to have stamina because workshops can continue for a whole day or two. It is long and tiring. They cannot run workshops on their own and they have to share the load with a colleague.

On Monday and Tuesday we repeat the information and they begin to correct it. Whilst they practice I have to be on my toes and give them positive criticism. Their workshop skills slowly improve with practice and they eventually move quite smoothly. I am impressed with their perseverance and their positive attitude to succeed with this task.

I have to remember that it is the end of the year. They are tired and crammed full of information so I cannot be too hard on them. Hopefully they should be ready to deliver the abuse workshops successfully to their clients in the community during next year.

Journal November 1995

"I had a difficult week with the women and it hasn't been plain sailing with them. Actually it was a mixed week. The difficult part was when they had to go back and re-practice their workshop skills.

In theory they know a lot already but in practice it is a different story. For some reason they started reading their worksheets to the 'audience' instead of using open questions to get the 'audience' to participate. I am sure a lot of them were unprepared. I was upset with them and felt so despondent and frustrated. I go over and over this stuff endlessly until I don't know what else I can do to get this into their heads.

Last week was a tough week when I was so upset with Ntombi. I was recapping work that we have gone over ad nauseum in class. I asked her what the order of the different skills were that we use when we Counsel. I wanted her to say Prioritising, Choosing Options etc. She looked at me as if I was asking her something that she had never heard of in her life. I couldn't believe that she could do this.

Usually when I have felt emotional in class I have not cried but last week I just couldn't stop myself and the tears just ran down my cheeks. The women were also so upset that almost everyone was crying with me! Anyway it was most necessary. I realised that no-one has had any expectations of each of them and they don't know that they have the potential to be the best that they can be.

At the end of the day they all apologised and said that I had a right to be upset with them and they knew that they had done 'wrong'. It was one way of making them aware of the importance of doing their homework and practicing the work done in class. Hopefully they will be more wary of me if they don't do their homework."

A lighter side to all of this is that during the usual go-around at the end of class I ask them how they are feeling and if they have any comments about today. When I get to Bertha she says that she feels better than she felt in the morning. Then she says "Rolene, one thing that I learnt today is that you are human. But do not worry, we still love you." I giggle inside and thank her for seeing me as human. I say that I am as human as each and every one of them. If I am not human I wonder how they see me.

I have good news for everyone. I am able to tell them that we received permission from the Dean of the Cathedral to stage a silent demonstration against woman abuse on the cathedral steps next Friday. I cannot be there as I will be talking at Libertas Hospital and again it will be something that they will do responsibly on their own.

We bring cardboard and Kokis into class and they write slogans onto the boards and onto pieces of paper. We write slogans such as "*If you are not part of the problem become part of the solution*" and "*Without peace in our hearts and our homes there will never be peace in our land*". We also write "*Abuse and Domestic Violence have to stop*". They are looking forward to standing on the Cathedral steps and facing the public. They have an important message to deliver.

After their demo they come back to class and they are on a high. They tell me about people who come up to them and who question them and how they could answer them. They tell me about people driving in cars who hoot loudly when they see their slogans. They are all encouraged by the public's response.

I cannot believe that it is almost the end of this year. I can feel how mentally and physically exhausted we all are. We are looking forward to our rest. They are blossoming from grassroots women into community workers. I am thrilled and delighted with how they are turning out. They have to keep improving but it is all due to our combined pushing and pulling and our hard work.

Peter and Linda Biehl are constantly in touch with us and I find Peter's beautifully scripted faxes waiting for me on the reception desk of Ikamva Labantu. I take them into class and read them to our women. Having the Biehl's contact and their inquiries into how we are lifts us up. I write back and let them know that the women will write their exams next week. They reply wishing all the women good luck and say that they have trust in them to do well.

After the tense sessions with workshops I decide that next year we shall take some Fridays for supervision. We shall have to take time brushing up on all the skills learnt this year. I feel happier with this decision. It is fascinating to see how this pilot course is already changing in so many ways. The women also feel more comfortable and more confident about this decision.

Journal 12th December 1995

"The trainees write their final written exam tomorrow and I have spent a lot of time preparing for it. I have written out the questions and I think that the answers are not difficult. All I want to know is if they understand the work that we have done. I don't want to catch them out. I know that there is a lot of information for them to go through but I have prepared and educated them in class and in the go-arounds.

My homeopath told me today "This is your life Rolene and you have to live it". It has been a tough year all in all".

It is now the morning of the 13th of December and it is finally exam time. I am ready to see what they have learnt. They write their exams today and I know that this is a big day for them. None of my women have written exams before now. They have written tests but this is an accumulation of all that they have learnt. And although we have had umpteen times to practice the information I am aware that it should be nerve-wracking for them.

Before I leave home I gather their exam papers, the foolscap papers for their answers, and pens from my office. And I leave a bit earlier so I can set up the room before they arrive.

When I enter the classroom it strikes me that five months and almost all of their learning has been completed. It is almost unbelievable. I remember the first day when they arrived, new and

unsure of themselves, and now it is almost the last day in class and they are now strong and proud women. We can be proud of their huge transformation from unawareness to knowledge.

Today when they arrive in class they are all very quiet. They greet each other without smiles and with serious faces. I cannot imagine what is going on their heads. It is the first exam that they have ever written. I am not feeling good either. I have a tummy ache. There is too much stress.

I ask them firstly to put their handbags at the end of the room. Then I tell them that they can sit anywhere at the tables. The tables are set up with their chairs and pieces of foolscap paper and pens are laid out in front of them.

When they are settled I give them some announcements. I tell them that I shall hand out their exam papers and they have an hour and a half to answer the questions. They may answer the questions in a different order but they must write the question numbers above each of their answers. When they have finished answering the questions they must check their work. When they raise their hands I shall collect their papers. They may not leave until everyone has completed the paper in the allotted time slot.

I hand out the papers. They begin to read the questions and to start writing. I sit quietly at my desk and observe them. I wonder if I am correct in my calculations made during this year's work. Who will pass and who will fail. I wonder if I have designed questions to capture their knowledge.

Some finish slightly earlier than the others and they rest their heads on their folded arms on the tables. After the hour and a half I close off and they hand in their papers. I tell them that tomorrow I shall return their papers to them. They leave quietly but when they get into the corridor I hear them talking to each other. I wonder how they feel about the paper.

I sit at the dining room table with a sandwich and a strong cup of coffee. I am curious to see the results. I spend the afternoon marking the papers. I am rather chuffed with myself as the average mark for the exam is 62%. I am amazed. There are only 2 women below 50%. And the highest mark is 77%.

What a relief it is for me. I am so happy. I am relieved that the two lowest marks come from the women from whom I thought they would come. They are confused so I decide to set an oral for these two women so I can double check that they know their work. I have to think seriously about them representing Mosaic in the community. Our reputation has to be excellent. They cannot let us down.

In class today there is a much lighter atmosphere. In the go-around we go through the questions and answers. Everyone is curious to know how they have done. When I hand out the papers most of them are pleased. They all share that it is a fair paper and covers all that we have been doing.

I tell the women who have the two lowest marks that they will have to do an oral with me tomorrow. They must go home and study. Especially now that they have the answers from the go-around it should be easier. If I can see that they know their work they will be able to graduate in July next year. Before we break for the holidays the two women have their orals. They are slightly improved. I decide that I shall give them the chance to see if they are stronger in giving their practical services to the community.

The last two days are spent revising the work from all the different modules. Then we take out our initial sheet of Expectations that we wrote five months ago. We go through them one by one and they see that they have covered everything that they expected to receive from the training. There are also topics not on our list and they all laugh when we think about them.

Now, at the end of this year, we finally have the time to share what they have learnt and how they have changed. No one is the same person who arrived in July. We can all see the changes as they share with us.

Dawn initial begins to share with us *‘Firstly when I came to class I was ignorant and unaware of my rights as a woman. I feel that I have now come home to reality. I have changed quite a bit. I am a more confident and dependable woman. I cannot actually believe that it has been five months. I have experienced a lifetime’s worth of knowledge. From my divorce and the abuse I suffered for thirteen years with my now ‘ex-husband’ I feel that I can identify with any woman in their need. I am much more aware of my own and other women’s situations. I feel quite confident and determined to carry out what will be expected of me from*

Mosaic. It has been and is wonderful to be a part of this extraordinary group. All the different natures, cultures, different walks of life and different attitudes all put together is quite an experience and the end result is quite explosive. I have learnt so much from each person individually. There is so much warmth, understanding and acceptance in the group. I can only smile and imagine how it will be when I do my community work visits with Rolene. I am waiting with great anticipation."

Alice is then keen to talk. *"When I first came to this group I was shy. I didn't know the others and there was no communication between us. I was scared because people in Cape Town call us 'plaasjapies' (farm monkeys) because of our farms in Paarl and in the vineyards around us. Then I learnt to call the group by their names and a good understanding and respect was there for each other. Then we loved one another and we shared our problems and our inner childhood and opened up to each other. I have learnt how I was abused by my culture, religion and society. From the day that we were born as girls we would be abused and our parents would grow rich because of the Lobola. Mosaic taught me to say 'no' and to 'ask if I don't understand'. I am educating other women. Now I want to go out into the community to do my workshops and teach and educate the community. I want to listen to other's experiences and be there for helping them."*

Sheilla shares next *"Before I started this course I was blank. I didn't know that I even had a right to express my feelings. I was always blaming myself in every situation I came across. I was afraid of saying what I wanted or needed to say. I was empty. Being a member of our group is like being with my family. I am willing to share my problems and everything that bothers or worries me. I know that as I speak to you it will vanish in me. I take you as my sisters and I am happy to be with you at all times. God has given us power of togetherness and understanding. It is a gift from God to be in this group and I have a lovely compassionate talented teacher. Learning about assertiveness was like the sun shining on me because I was in darkness. But now I can say I am in the light of knowledge. Assertiveness helped me to improve my life ever since. My life of blaming myself, afraid of saying 'no' has changed. It works for me and I think I shall use it as a weapon in the community, to be sure of myself and believe in myself."*

After each person speaks we thank her for her words of support and comfort. It is wonderful to know how each person came to Mosaic initially and how they are different because of their training and of being with their group of sisters. For me it is a validation of

all the work that has been put into the course, and of the original concept of training these women to become personally empowered.

Hilda is next in the circle and she shares with enthusiasm. *"I was very shy and didn't know how to communicate. Will I say the right thing at the right time? Will you accept me as I am? Even if questions are asked I didn't want to answer first, even if I knew the answer. Before doing the course I was like a caged animal. When you shared your experiences with all of us then I felt secure and I trusted everyone. I said to myself 'I know everything about you so that means you can't talk about me or gossip about me'. When I saw that everyone was participating I didn't want to be left alone. I learnt to know my own identity and I got my strength from sharing stuff that I never shared with anyone before. That helped a lot. The support, caring and encouragement made me believe in myself and the knowledge and skills empowered me. I had a feeling of freedom for the first time in my life. The day that Rolene asked us to take our scarves and berets off I felt so light headed I could fly as high as I wanted to! I felt as if my husband's ancestors were watching me but I felt strong! I've learnt how to relate to people and meet them at their levels. I try my best to make peace and I am a caring person and I have respect for others. I am a good listener when one of our members needs a friend to talk to. I've dealt with conflicts in my community. At personal go-arounds this means that Mosaic cares about our well-being as well. We cry and laugh together in Mosaic and my English has improved tremendously. At Mosaic I learnt that we have to heal ourselves before healing others."*

Jean is keen to share her story. *"At the beginning I was shy and scared. I was worried about what kind of teacher I would have and am I going to understand how she talks or not? I was not sure about my English. I was worried about my concentration. I was also frightened and not sure about what I wanted. Today I am strong to do what I want: for example, I took my husband's money and bought an iron and then after that I felt strong. I learnt to know I was working like a slave before, doing all the housework alone after coming from my job. My husband was sitting and waiting for me to cook. Now he helps me even with washing the kids. I am not frightened of my husband any more. I have no more aggressive behaviour. I feel confident and always excited. I have skills to fight for my rights. My inner strength is boosted and I have high self-esteem. Ever since I came to Mosaic I am becoming more aware of social issues and realities within different communities. I am a role model within my community."*

Noxolo waits for her turn to talk *"Before I started the course I was an aggressive person, weak and I was shy to talk about problems I had during my*

childhood. I couldn't share my feelings and discuss them with people I don't know. It was difficult for me to participate at first because it was my first time in a group and I was the youngest. I didn't know anyone and I found myself too young to share my problems with old people because I never did this before. What encouraged me to share was when the old people opened up and shared their problems. Then I found myself free to open up too and I was comfortable about it. Now I participate and share things that happened to me before I came to Mosaic. There is no one who takes other people's problems as a joke. We support each other whatever it costs. I learnt not to be rude and talk when other people are talking in the go-around. We must listen and not disturb others. At first I couldn't say 'no' and stand for my rights. I have grown to be confident through the assertiveness module and I tell myself that if I want this I am going to have it. For me being a member of our group is a great pleasure and it encourages me and makes me empowered. I am different in many ways because I am no longer aggressive but confident and stronger. The strength at Mosaic is prayer at all times. We meditate and pray before we share about our personal problems. And love and honesty, reliability and trust are important in what we are doing."

Caroline, our talker, comes next *"When I heard about Mosaic I never thought I would be accepted because I knew myself as a 'bad luck' person and I was not educated. On the first day I was excited but nervous to be with strangers. I didn't know what the course was all about. Before I came to Mosaic I was abused and powerless. I did not know about love and what it is for. I never had love. I kept things inside me and when I had enough I would blow up and shout because that's how I expressed my feelings. I started the course and I found love and being understood. I have sisterhood to share with you, and to be believed in. The studies, they were hard, difficult, painful, but because we have a great, understanding, loving and patient teacher who wants the best from us I did manage through. To go back to my Inner child was painful but after that I found the light. Counselling was wonderful when we were using our own experiences. I had to bring up everything that was within me before I could gain the aims and objectives of Mosaic as a community worker. Now I don't keep something in me even if it is hurtful. Our group has really changed me. I am best at telling stories about things I have heard in the community. Now I like to share about my private life. Because we are doing dangerous work in the community we are connected to God. I ask protection and guidance from God and I always use the 'white light' that is our protection every day. I do prayer and meditation at the go-arounds and I even pray before I go to bed at night. I even do prayer and meditation with my children.*

I really have changed. I do shout sometimes but not always as I did before. I know I am wrong when I behave like that. Our teacher has always been here for me. I can say I am born again since I joined Mosaic. I am confident, great and healthy. What I have learnt from Mosaic I shall use in the community. There is still a lot of work that I have to do."

Lulu, our grandmother speaks with a loud voice and we all laugh at her. *"When I first started the course I was not sure of myself. Before I started I was frustrated, lonely, not knowing what to do. I didn't want to talk about the things that hurt me in my life to people I do not know. Now I have learnt from this group about confidence. I can talk freely. You are more than my sisters. You are trustworthy and reliable and you have the same problems as mine. I like talking in the group and I gained knowledge and some experiences where we were all at the same level. I also learnt that I was abused as a child. I wasn't treated the same way as my brothers. I had to look after the children and clean the house. My brother today is well educated and I am not. In my marriage I also got abused. This affected how I felt about myself. My self-esteem and my voice were low when I entered Mosaic. And Mosaic helped me to find myself and my voice. What I like about myself in our group is that I don't easily get cross when anyone teases me. I am learning about myself and others. I give my love to other people and I love to care and help others. The prayers and the 'white light' from God surround me and give me strength to go on. I thank God for Mosaic and my trainer. I still want to learn more in order to reach my goals."*

Ntombi speaks quite briefly *"When I came for the first time I saw new faces and I didn't even know what to say to you. I couldn't even open my mouth because I was quiet and shy. But when you started opening and sharing I saw some of our problems were similar to mine. This group has made me full of self-esteem. You show trust and confidentiality. Now I am the person I want to be."*

They jokingly describe each other's quirks and traits. We laugh about the phone kept in Lulu's bra. How the phone rings and she jumps up and scurries out of the classroom with her hand in her bra and her head held low, apologising and embarrassed. Lulu comes in for a lot of laughter as she has grown so much. She is no longer the baby with the baby voice.

We laugh at the funny things that Jean has said during the year and Jean laughs the loudest. We laugh at how Bertha brings the video into class and they all get into trouble. It is very funny for us now. They thank Bertha for the greatest learning lesson in conflict

resolution. It is something that they will never forget. Bertha appreciates their thanks and she says that it is something that she will never forget.

They even laugh at me. They say that when I wear a certain pair of shoes they know that they are in for the 'high-jump' on that day. It is funny for me and for all of us. I have no idea that they notice my shoes and that they are significant to my behaviour on those days. It is a wonderful way to end this year. They can see where they have come from and where they are now going. It is empowering for them to share with their sisters and with me. It grows our mutual love for each other.

They look forward to their holidays. Some of them are travelling to the Eastern Cape to their families and some are staying at home. I wish them a happy Xmas and a happy and healthy New Year and a safe return to Cape Town. I look forward to seeing them again next year. We hug and kiss and thank each other for a most incredible five months of learning and sharing. We have learnt so much from each other. And they can at last call themselves Mosaic community workers. I cannot wait to visit their venues with them next year in the community and meet all the people that they will work with.

All the struggles and the highs and lows have been met and we have survived. During next year my women will put their knowledge into practice. They have persevered and they are proud of themselves. We are blessed and we are successful. The women have taught me so much and along with them I have changed in every way.

It will be a year of accountability for Mosaic. With our reputation being built up by our community worker's performances we hope to make a difference to the lives of abused women. It will be the real beginning of Mosaic as an NGO working with respect, trust and understanding together with our clients who suffer from domestic violence and abuse.

For the last time this year I tidy the room. I pack my bag and close up the classroom. Now it looks so empty. There is a little bit of nostalgia because this year is over. But when their practical field work begins, they will still come into Mosaic on Fridays next year for supervision and further learning with me. I go next door to visit Helen. We chat about the end of a roller-coaster year. We are two

middle aged women who are striving to make a difference in poor and abused people's lives. We agree that Mosaic will be the women's project of Ikamva Labantu. We are on the same wave length and now we both look forward to a well-earned break.

Finally I am on holiday. It is a time of quiet contemplation for me. I can at last relish all the years of tough work that have ultimately established Mosaic. Until next year I need to relax and take a well-earned breather. We all deserve it.

I am incredibly fortunate. Mosaic is an organisation that has in every way changed all of our lives.

Happy New Year

It is the 15th of January 1996 and the start of another year. I decide to go into town to check out the classroom the day before their arrival. Before I leave home I gather my worksheets and training papers. We shall need these for our modules that we did not complete last year. Every Friday when they come in for supervision I shall carry on revising their practical skills and continuing with their lessons. I am really looking forward to starting again.

The room has been empty for four weeks and it needs tidying. I dust the desk, chairs and tables. I arrange the chairs in our oval circle and I open the door to our little veranda. The early morning air flows freshly into the classroom and it is a warm and beautiful day. Today gives me time to gather myself together and get back into my teacher, trainer mode. I visit everyone at Ikamva and we greet each other affectionately. We all seem to be well rested and ready for another year. It is great to see Helen, Angela and little Evelyn at the switchboard. I close and lock our classroom door and return home to enjoy the last day of my holiday. I walk along the beachfront and breathe in the sea air which always invigorates me. I feel happy to be alive. This year won't be as difficult as last year.

I will work with the women every Friday in the classroom and supervise them while they educate abused people in different community venues. They will advertise Mosaic to role players in the communities. At last it is the Real Mosaic. We will eventually see Mosaic in 'action'.

They are the first Mosaic community workers in Cape Town with a wealth of knowledge about Abuse. I believe that there is no other service organisation in South Africa that has trained community workers who are thoroughly skilled at working with abuse. It is exciting to see how they will grow from their grassroots beginnings to become our competent Mosaic community workers. I hope they will remain humble and rooted and not become, as they say 'high minded'.

Tuesday the 16th dawns and I go into town early so that I can be there when they all return to class. I once more open all the doors to lighten and freshen our room. Later it will be hot but now it is a perfect morning. There is an airiness about today, an anticipation of what is to come. I look forward to greeting them after their break.

Every day Alice travels from Paarl to Cape Town by train and she is the first to arrive. When I think of her sacrifice to study I am amazed. Slowly they arrive, friends and colleagues who have grown close to each other over the time that we have been together. We are happy to see one another again. They hug and kiss and then greet the late arrivals with excitement and joy. They are busy and noisy as they share their news and enquire about their break and how they are doing. I observe them affectionately. We are back in our world again.

Eventually I quieten them down and we start the go-around. I explain that during my first visit to them I will supervise them as they educate people about abuse. On Fridays in class we will continue to practice their workshop and support group skills. We make plans for me to visit and supervise them. And we discuss which venues they will use in their own communities.

I remind them about the importance of punctuality. They cannot keep 'township' time. I do not want to have to wait for them on my own at community venues especially in areas where I shall not feel safe. Time-keeping is important for them for meetings with clients and service providers. They must be early rather than late.

As part of their networking skills I remind them to have a small book to write down the dates of their entries, the venues and names of people in key positions in the venues. These people can be of help to them again in the future. I promise to purchase some diaries but until I do they must use their books to write down information.

Today they know that it will probably be the last time that they can present to the class before going out into 'the big wide world'. They need encouragement and reminders from their colleagues. During the day they practice their presentation skills in front of the class. They give each other feedback. Some need feedback about their voice levels and body language but they do well with their recalled knowledge from last year.

The class asks questions that men will probably ask during their presentations. There is laughter from some questions but they know that it is serious. Men can get them into trouble with questions about paternalism and culture. For men think they do not 'abuse' their partners. They can do whatever they like as long as they paid Lobola.

Going into the different places where the coloured and black communities live in Cape Town is a fascinating adventure for me. As a white woman I have not legally been able to visit these townships until last year after our democratic election. It is a gift to me to have this opportunity to do so now. Despite the fact that I will travel to all of their Cape Town communities, I tell them that I will first visit Alice in Paarl an hour out of Cape Town.

The day arrives when I start to supervise Mosaic's community workers. On the drive to Paarl I am a slightly concerned because I know how Alice can be forthright in her manner of speaking. I hope that she will be confident yet humble when educating the community.

I meet Alice at the clinic and she is proud to introduce me to the nurses. They have given her permission to present and they welcome me. Alice educates in Afrikaans as there are many coloured Afrikaans-speaking women in the audience. At times she translates for the Xhosa women who speak Xhosa, but who can mostly understand Afrikaans. She has to translate all the information about abuse in her head because she has learnt it all in English. However, Alice is fluent in the three languages and I listen to her switch from one language to the other. I am impressed.

Suddenly I realise how naïve I was during the training of the Community Workers. I truly did not give a thought to the fact that they would have to translate all the information on abuse into another tongue. I was pretty harsh when they did not remember the information because all I was interested in was that they understood the English words and meanings. How difficult it must have been for them and I must have been a terrible tyrant. They are truly superwomen and have achieved miracles.

During Alice's presentation I am pleasantly surprised with her performance. She introduces herself to her audience and she introduces me. Then in Afrikaans she speaks about the organisation and calmly and patiently explains the services that we deliver in

Mosaic. She explains everything carefully about abuse and answers all their questions. Her tone of voice, energy level and body language are appropriate and I am very pleased with her and her presentation.

When she finishes we take time together and I give her feedback. She is happy. I leave Alice and she is confident about doing more presentations. Now she is keen to run workshops and a support group. I travel happily back to town.

I decide that my second supervision will be with Dawn. She works in the vast Mitchells Plain area about three quarters of an hour out of Cape Town. She will take me to the various venues in the different parts of Mitchells Plain and I am excited to explore these districts with her.

The day begins and I leave home early to meet Dawn. I have not visited Mitchells Plain before and it is a bit challenging for me to find directions. Dawn is waiting for me in front of the Magistrates Court that is next to the Police Station in the Mitchell Plain's Centre. We go into the Court and Dawn introduces me to Magistrate Francois Botha. He is enthusiastic about the services that we will offer to abused women. He is a gentleman and he will be an enormous asset to Mosaic in the future.

Then we walk to the Hospital situated next door to the Police Station. Dawn introduces me to the nurses. She asks if she can use the Hospital as a venue to educate the patients. They tell us that we need the Manager's consent to work in Government Hospitals. He works in Woodstock a suburb of Cape Town. I am not surprised by their request because Mosaic is the first organisation to educate people in hospitals. I shall have to speak to him and ask if we can gain access to the Government Hospitals in the different areas of Mitchells Plain and Khayelitsha.

From Mitchell Plain's Centre we travel to the Day Clinics in other areas such as Eastridge, Westridge, Portlands, Rocklands, Woodlands, Merrydale, Tafelsig and Lenteguur. I do not know these different areas but Dawn who has lived in Mitchells Plain knows them well. We travel by car as they are some distance away from each other.

When we enter the Day Clinics, Dawn introduces me to the nurses on duty and gets permission from them to educate the patients

in their clinics. Dawn introduces herself and me to the patients in the clinic. They look at me with open-eyed curiosity because it is strange for a white woman to be in their clinics. But I smile at them and I am confident because I am Dawn's trainer and someone who is enabling her to bring vital information about abuse to them.

I listen to Dawn educating the patients in perfect Afrikaans about abuse. Fortunately most people who live in Mitchells Plain are Coloured and they speak Afrikaans. My Afrikaans is definitely not 'great' but I can certainly understand her. Dawn presents with energy and answers their questions in detail. The clinics are small or large and she speaks to different sized groups of patients. Even when some of the clinics are full of people and very noisy, she raises her voice level and continues to educate. She explains about abuse and the work that she does as a Mosaic Community worker. The people listen carefully and the nursing sister in one of the clinics shows a great deal of interest. Dawn and I are thrilled.

For the rest of the year Dawn will select the particular clinics that she will visit. She will work in the clinics that are close to each other. It is a large area to service and without a car she will have to use taxis to get to the different clinics. I sense that Mitchells Plain will be a very time consuming community for her to work in. When we are finished I am thoroughly exhausted and Dawn is too. However, I know that she is a confident and self-assured community worker. We hug with the resulting success of a job well done.

I am very pleased to have visited all the areas of Mitchells Plain. For me travelling to Mitchells Plain is a personally rewarding experience. When she is in class Dawn will mention the different areas and she will remind me about where they are. Then I shall know which clinic she is talking about.

At the end of the second day I am encouraged that two of our women have remembered their information and can deliver accurately to people about abuse. Now I am looking forward to hearing the other women perform.

I decide to visit Sheilla and Ntombi from Nyanga and Lulu from Gugulethu on the same day. The two townships are close together and it won't take me long to travel between them. The following morning I visit Phillipi Court where Sheilla and Ntombi meet me.

The Phillipi Court hears cases from the whole area including Gugulethu, Nyanga, Cross Roads and Phillipi.

They take me to the Phillipi Court's Magistrate's office and introduce me to Mr de Bruin. He is happy to meet me and I am happy to meet him. Sheilla has already received permission from him to present and he is very encouraging that we use his court to educate. Sheilla and Ntombi will present to the people about abuse whilst they wait for help from the Clerk of the Court.

The Phillipi Magistrates Court is filled with abused Xhosa women. They sit outside the Clerk's office in a simple room on hard wooden benches. They can wait for hours for attention. Sheilla speaks to a few of the women and she realises that many of these Xhosa women cannot read the Protection Order which is only printed in English and Afrikaans. There does not seem to be anyone who can help them to translate the Protection Order into Xhosa, not even the Clerks. I tell Sheilla and Ntombi that they will have to translate for the people into Xhosa, in order to write their affidavits and apply for their Protection Orders.

The Court is a good venue for us to market Mosaic and to educate women about abuse and the Protection Order. Sitting patiently and still, these women listen carefully to our community workers. At last there is someone speaking to them in Xhosa and someone who knows what she is talking about.

Sheilla and Ntombi share the presentation on abuse and they both do well. After they have given information about abuse they tell the women that they will be working in the court in the future. If anyone needs attention they can speak to either of them. When I leave the court they are busy with women who are asking them questions. I am very happy that this venue is available to us. And even Ntombi surprises me with her presentation.

I then drive to meet Lulu who waits for me on the pavement outside the Police Station in Gugulethu. We hug when we meet. I remember when Lulu visits the police station during their first exercise marketing Mosaic, she is not welcomed by the police. Today she takes me to the Senior Police Commander. I meet him and tell him about Mosaic and about the work that Lulu offers to the community. He promises us that the police will refer abused women

to Lulu at Mosaic. I wonder how she will be treated by the police and how many women will be referred to her. But at least they know who Lulu is and that I am her supervisor.

We then go to the Vuyani Day Clinic, the Maternity Clinic and Day Hospital in Gugulethu. There are a number of women waiting for attention. Lulu introduces me to the nurses and then in Xhosa she presents to the patients sitting in the clinics and the hospital. She presents well although her voice is still a bit weak to reach above the noise in the clinic. Again, the information is well received by the patients. Some men are present but they do not give her too much trouble with their questions. And Lulu seems to answers the questions well.

After her presentations I give her feedback. She realises that she has to raise her voice in order to be heard. But I am happy with her presentation.

It is mid-day and I have had another busy but successful day with my community workers. These community visits are great fun especially as I am protected by my community workers who look after me. Tomorrow I am looking forward to my next visit into Khayelitsha.

Khayelitsha is the largest township outside of Cape Town and it is home to approximately one and a half to two million people. Hilda and Caroline live there and Jean lives in Macassar in the north of Khayelitsha. They will work in the large areas of Site B and Site C in Khayelitsha. Getting to Site B is far more complicated than getting to Mitchells Plain. It is my first visit to this vast township and if I am honest I am not really comfortable. As I take the off-ramp from the highway into Khayelitsha I ask God to please protect me and surround me with His white light. I feel more secure with God protecting me.

At the robots there are people who look at me, a white woman driving alone. There are many people who jay-walk across the roads and the taxis drive carelessly not stopping at robots. People are building shacks on the sides of the road with children playing on the pavements. Khayelitsha is busy and noisy and I have to be careful of where I am and where I am going.

I eventually meet them at the Site B Hospital. I drive through the hospital's security gates and they are waiting for me. I am happy and relieved to see them. As we enter the hospital there are hundreds of patients waiting for attention. I am surprised at the huge number of people patiently waiting in this first waiting room. In order for Hilda and Caroline to educate them about abuse they will need to split their presentations initially to educate the first half and then the second. If they do not they will not be heard above the noise in this hospital.

There is a lot of activity. Nurses call the patients names from their files for medical attention. People come and go, in and out of the waiting room. I only learn from Hilda that this hospital has a cut-off number of people who can be seen every day. Patients have to get up at three or four o'clock in the morning if they want to be seen by the doctors. Many patients are turned away no matter how ill they are. Then those who have 'made it' sit here and wait for attention. Sometimes for hours. We walk through the hospital and there are more patients waiting in the corridors and on benches, and a further number of patients waiting in another room. The hospital is intensely busy. Apart from some of the doctors I am the only white face around the hospital. Everyone stares at me. I am pleased that I am with my community workers who stay close to me. In the corridors there are a number of seriously wounded people with stab wounds and physical injuries who lie waiting on stretchers without blankets or someone to see them. They lie curled in pain or staring up at the ceiling with eyes that just stare blankly. I am horrified. There is not enough room in this hospital to accommodate them in wards. And probably not enough staff to attend to them.

We enter a nurse's office and Hilda introduces me. The nurse gives us permission to educate the patients. She seems pleasant and helpful. We go to the furthest waiting room with approximately thirty patients waiting for attention. It is less noisy and more contained and it is easier for Hilda and Caroline to present about abuse. They speak in English and in Xhosa. Most of the patients are women but there are a few feisty men who do not like what they are saying. I watch them from the back of the room and I am keen to see how they cope. Because of our practice in class, they successfully know how to answer them.



Hilda educating patients at Khayelitsha hospital

Afterwards I give them feedback and congratulate them both on a fairly difficult but successful presentation. Then we meet with the nurses and say thank you to them. It is a good feeling when they say that Hilda and Caroline can return at any stage when they need to present.

After we leave the hospital Hilda and Caroline take me next door to the Maternity and Obstetrics Unit and the TB clinic. They show me the dispensary where people wait for medication. It is full of women. The nurses agree that they can present there too. Then we cross the road to visit the Site B Police Station where again I am introduced to the Station Commander. He seems much friendlier and more accommodating than the police in Gugulethu and interested in what we can offer him. We are all pleased with our visit to Khayelitsha.

I next continue visiting Jean in Macassar and Bertha in Belhar and they both perform well. Then I visit Noxolo in Langa where she presents to children at the Langa High School and The Golden Girls which is a home for disabled children. They all educate these women, children and the youth in their community venues and in their schools about abuse and abusive behaviour.

With each visit when I accompany them into their communities, Mosaic's women can be proud of the way they present. They remember their body language and give the crucial facts about abuse to the women. As with Alice, Dawn and Lulu I am impressed with their ability to answer difficult questions satisfactorily. While I observe them educating in the different venues I notice that there are some women who watch them and who are keen to educate people about abuse. It seems to all of us that they want to be volunteers for Mosaic.

We are now back in class following their first community presentations. I am happy to share how pleased I am with their performances. They congratulate each other and are relieved and renewed with enthusiasm. They are keen to go back into the communities in the coming weeks. But they want to practice how to run workshops.

From March onward our women record every day's statistics from the community so that every month can be accounted for. It is important to keep data right from the very beginning so that in future years we can see exactly how many people we have reached. I have to thank my UCT social work studies for training me and for helping me keep accurate statistics. I remember how I hated recording data. It was a real pain but it was necessary to do them.

Several men who ask our women for counselling are referred to other organisations who deal with men. At this stage it is too difficult for our women to counsel men. They do not have the skills. Counselling men is tricky and men can be manipulative.

I cannot believe that 50,000 people are reached through our services in the first four months of operation. And I did not realise how many men would be exposed to presentations about abuse in hospitals, churches, schools and community meetings. Thank goodness the response from men and women has been positive.

Journal February 1996

"I was told by some Rotarians who are on the allocations committee of Community Chest that we shall probably be getting about R20,000 from them! And the Biebls are having a mailing to mark the anniversary of Amy's birthday and the anniversary of South Africa's independence. They have asked people to

make donations to Mosaic. Peter told me that their foundation is only a \$10 and \$20 foundation as most people who contribute are students. But we are grateful for any donations that come into Mosaic.

A Rotarian friend of Peter's in San Francisco is looking at doing a Matching Grant through our two Rotary clubs mine being Waterfront Rotary Club. This is also exciting. We have hung in right from the beginning and we have faithfully believed that money would come to us. Our faith and patience have endured! There is so much to be grateful for!"

In March I realise that in four months' time we are in financial trouble. I have to find ten salaries for our women when they graduate. They need to be employed as Mosaic community workers. As a result I am working with the social workers at Ikamva Labantu and together we are trying to work out funding strategies for Mosaic. I am very grateful for their support. I am just hoping that I do not have to pay the community workers' salaries by myself.

Directing Mosaic is a lonely business. Especially when there is no money and the financial support is difficult to get. I often feel trapped with so many expectations from the community workers and so much associated responsibility for the financial support of Mosaic placed on me.

I fax the Biehls and let them know what everyone has accomplished from February to April their first real months of working in the community. I tell the Biehls about my community visits with each community worker and how successful they have been. I tell them about meeting with service providers and leaders in the different communities and how positively they receive us. There is much to relate in such a short period of time. I try to keep the Biehls in touch with what we are doing so that they still feel that they are a part of Mosaic.

We enjoy receiving Peter's carefully printed faxed replies. Peter writes that he and Linda are excited about the news, that I must send our community workers their love and tell them that they still want to hear the 'good news'. They say that Amy would be proud of them and they are always united with us as our community workers continue to serve women who are abused.

We are preparing for the Graduation Ceremony for our Community Workers on the 29th June 1996. It has not been easy to find a suitable venue for our graduation ceremony. However we manage to organise a venue with the University of the Western Cape and we are fortunate to be able to book their Hall for our Ceremony. To graduate at the university gives added stature to the community workers' ceremony.

Unfortunately the Biehls cannot attend our graduation ceremony. Having been in Cape Town for the USAID meeting they only intend to return to Cape Town in August. We are disappointed but we understand that they are busy people and America is far away. They send a wonderful message of congratulations to our women and apologise for not being with us. We tell them that we shall miss them but we will send them news of the wonderful graduation day celebrations. Plus I promise to read their fax during the ceremony.

We have to make a list of who the women want to invite from their families and friends as well as from the communities in which they work. I want to invite my own family and friends as I want to 'show off' my Graduates. We have to design and finish printing the invitations so that we can start sending them out to the guests we want to invite.

We use as many of our women's contacts to set up the ceremony as possible. They organise a photographer. They find caterers for the food and drink. The women arrange taxis from the different communities to bring them and their invitees to the ceremony and to take them back home again. Excitement is in the air. There is so much to do and there is not a dull moment. Sometimes I wish that I could clone myself over and over again.

We are so grateful that Pick and Pay and Woolworths agreed to sponsor large banners for us as they also add stature to our event. The banners are printed with *'Mosaic Training Service and Healing Centre for Women Congratulates its Graduates'*, *'Knowledge is Power – Mosaic Educates to Liberate'* and *'Only with Peace in our Homes and our Hearts can we have Peace in our Land.'*

Now in class we have to rehearse for the ceremony so that they know the sequence of events. They have to know who does what and when. Everything has to go smoothly and be professionally

presented. I love designing the ritual and making it a fun occasion as well as a dignified ceremony.

We practice in class. We open the door from our classroom and they practice lining up in the corridor as if they are walking into the Hall. They practice standing in front of their chairs for the National Anthem. We work out between us who will be the mistress of ceremonies, who will be the guest speaker and who will thank the speaker and give her a gift from Mosaic.

They work out the order in which they will speak at the function and how long they will take to share their stories. I make sure that they do not speak for too long. We work out when we shall sing during the ceremony and what we shall sing. Sheilla and Lulu will begin singing 'Igamelama Kozikazi Malibongwe - Let the Name of Women be Praised' and other beautiful Xhosa songs. Singing raises the atmosphere in the Hall and they have such beautiful voices to share with our audience.

At last it is the day of our graduation. We organise the room with their chairs and have the gifts ready. We hang the Pick 'n Pay banners up on the wall behind the graduates' chairs. They are seated in front of the hall facing the audience and behind the lectern.

Everyone arrives early and their nerves and joyfulness are infectious. However, Caroline is missing and we are all worried. I enter the hall and I ask everyone to bear with us because we are missing a graduate. Everyone is comfortable to carry on talking to each other. However, we do not have communication with Caroline. Where is she? Why is not she here?

Eventually Caroline appears. We are utterly relieved. She tells us that the car in which she was travelling had an accident and she wasn't going to come to the ceremony. She thought it was too late to join us. But how wonderful that she persevered and arrived. We can finally start our graduation ceremony.

As they walk into the hall I see how upright and proud they are. They walk tall and confidently. During the ceremony our community workers speak so well, as if they are presenting in community venues. Their tone of voice, their level of voice, their body language and their self-confidence are all there. I couldn't be more thrilled.

Some of my friends cry from the emotional stories that our graduates share about their lives. They talk about how difficult it was for them as they always wanted to serve in the communities. And now that they are graduates they are thrilled to be Mosaic community workers and to go out and support abused women who desperately need their help. After the ceremony my friends and family all congratulate me. They particularly speak about me training such wonderfully competent women who they have just witnessed graduating. I know how much my graduates have achieved and pleasure pulses through me.



*Alice, Bertha, Hilda, Jean, me, Sheilla, Caroline, Noxolo, Ntombi,
Dawn and Lulu at their Community Worker's graduation*

Our Graduation Ceremony is a resoundingly happy occasion. And now Mosaic is on its way to becoming a successful NGO in Cape Town with staff who are trained and qualified to serve and support abused women.

However, from the time that they graduate, my community workers as well as their volunteers put pressure on me to conduct another training course. The community workers tell me that women who listen to them presenting also want to be trained. They are slowly allowing these women to do certain sections of their presentations. I

tell my community workers that while I supervise them in class and in the community I cannot train another group of women. They understand. It is all too complicated for me to work out.

Journal March 1996

“As a result of all that has been going on I have given a lot of thought to my situation and I have realised that I shall be digging my own grave if I train another group of trainees now. I shall try and use volunteers as much as possible. I am just one person and not a supervoman. Eventually I shall probably have to train a trainer to help me train the new volunteers.

Training a second group has brought on a great deal of panic. When I panic I can't think or act clearly. I just think of the Panic. It explodes like crackers and I am scattered inside. Just the thought of it boggles my mind.

And to calm my mind I have decided that although the volunteers want to be trained I shall only train another group of community workers next year. I feel safe with this decision. Of course, the policeman in my head says that I must start training the next group of trainees now. But I am used to having a fight between my head and my heart! And it is usually my heart that wins! Ha! And Oh dear! Right now my mind is so confused I can't really do anything. My thoughts drive me crazy. How will I ever work this out?”

In class I decide that our graduates have permission to let their volunteers present the different kinds of abuse so that at some point they will also be able to provide these services. But they say that it is not enough for the volunteers. They want to be properly trained by Mosaic.

Perhaps the volunteers can help them with court work? At the moment our community workers have to accompany our Xhosa clients to court and translate for them as there is no one who can speak Xhosa in court to help them. They help them and other Xhosa women who are at the court to apply for Protection Orders which are only printed in English and Afrikaans. They also write affidavits for them. Court work is demanding and time-consuming for our community workers.

The training of a second group of community workers plays on my mind. I know that we need them to help us but it is a huge job to begin again. Especially after just completing the graduation of my

first group and supervising them. It mulls over in my brain day and night. I cannot sleep because the pros and the cons keep flipping back and forth. Should I or should I not? It will be great to have more help but can I physically do it? Each time I think about it I turn over and over and try to go to sleep. My mind is whirling. Sleep avoids me and the next day I am exhausted.

At last I manage to devise a training strategy. Very reluctantly, I realise that I will train these volunteers. I can train some of my women as trainers. They can help train the new group. I decide that Caroline and Sheilla will be the second group's trainers along with me.

Caroline and Sheilla will be my assistants and they will work with me before and after the second group's training sessions. They already know how trainers behave, and how they have to communicate. They will study their notes and they will have to train in the same way that I train. They are both competent workers and I think that they will be fine as trainers.

I look at my initial module notes. I need to cut down and run a modified version with shorter periods given to each section of the course. But the Counselling course will still take five weeks to complete. I cannot reduce this module. If they work with abused women they will have to learn how to counsel them properly.

Journal July 1996

"I feel weak. I have been persuaded and will train the second group once a week but will also supervise our present trainees once a week and be with them in their communities. When our first graduates work in the community I shall still be available to supervise them in their work. I am suddenly reminded of my visit to the psychic who told me that this is my life and I have to live it. I must do things slowly. At the moment I feel like I am being run over by a truck.

This week I begin to train Sheilla and Caroline. They both say that it is much easier for them to see what I am doing this time around. The first time was confusing for them. It is such a privilege to be part of such an enormous growth process. It is like teaching children at times. They take it all seriously.

It is difficult for me to explain how I am training Caroline and Shiella. It is as if their eyes are being opened for the first time and there is a great challenge for them to achieve. The apartheid system was totally immoral and deprived them

access to good education. But now they can achieve their goals. It is perfect. However it is still a major challenge for me.”

Shortly after Graduation Caroline, Sheilla and I start training sixteen of the second group of women. I am not sure how many of the second group will stay with Mosaic. All the women seem so keen to learn and I am amazed at their enthusiasm. However, they have had no interviews and I do not know them. They chose Mosaic and we did not choose them. We shall have to see how they turn out.

I decide that I must take a break and go on a long-overdue holiday. It is not the best time to leave the group but I have come to realise that there will probably never be an ideal time in the foreseeable future. It is the only time that I can get away from Mosaic. We have had our graduation ceremony and I am only starting to train the second group.

I need to visit my sisters in Canada and go down to the Biehls in the States. I call Peter and ask if I can visit them in August for three days. I ask if he can please organise for me to speak to some of their funders. Peter is very happy to have me stay with them. They stay in La Quinta, near to Las Palmas, California. It is some distance from La Quinta to Los Angeles where the funders are based. Peter says that he will make appointments to meet with them. We shall travel through on one of the days that I stay with them.

My trip is finally arranged for August when I shall leave Cape Town. There is much to do before I leave. I earnestly set to work training Caroline and Sheilla as trainers.

Journal July 1996

“Tomorrow Caroline and Sheilla are coming here so that we can work together and I can prepare them for while I am away. We shall do this every Tuesday until I leave. I had them at me last Tuesday and it worked well. The improvement in their attitude, confidence and ability to train is amazing. Sheilla said that she is so excited that she cannot sleep at night.

I told them to think of themselves as being well trained and competent community workers. I must be able to hand over to them. I feel confident that they can do this but this is determined by their attitudes of self- confidence. I was

nervous before last Tuesday's session with them. Now I feel much better about them training the group whilst I am away."

When I start Sheilla and Caroline's training it is interesting for me to see how much they have grown in every way. It is quite scary for them to learn how to train the second group and they have been quite nervous in front of the class. I have slowly allowed them to take over from me during lessons.

After class I sit with them for an hour and I reassure them on how they have been training. We discuss how they feel and I give them further notes. The notes include issues about how they can handle conflict and handle women who do not do their homework. The notes reflect how they will deal with personal issues such as when the group does not want to respect them or take their comments seriously.

They will have to keep to time. If they run over time they will not finish the work. And most important of all they must answer all the women's questions correctly. I remind Sheilla that she cannot say 'yes' when she means 'no'. I tell them that they can help each other during these times. They are a good team. After studying their training we plan for the next day's lessons. It all seems to be working out and I must say that it is easier than I anticipated. However, it is a long day with lots of concentrated effort and energy output.

Now I slowly begin to see the way clear to hand over to them when I am overseas. I relax a little bit and hope that they will cope with the group of new trainees. How will my first group of women cope without me? It is the first time they will be working without me since they were trained over a year ago. The pressure is now on for me before I leave for overseas next weekend.



Caroline and Sheilla, two Trainers of the Second Group

Martine will be on her own in the office at home. Although I will keep in touch with her via faxes I hope that she will be able to cope without me. I worry about how she will cope if proposals are requested by funders? She has to have money for the trainees' transport and take it into Gugulethu. I am concerned about her but I put her into God's hands and I trust that she will be looked after.

I think about how much there is in the pipeline when I return to Cape Town from my trip. There are research projects to be completed using Mosaic as a resource, there are overseas visitors when I get back, the fundraising breakfast with the Biehls and the Organisational Development workshop that we need to run with the board and staff. When I return I will have to supervise the second group in the field on a Tuesday and Thursday.

On Mondays I work at my home in the office. I reconstruct lesson plans and handouts and put them onto the computer so that the course will be absolutely clear-cut for Caroline and Sheilla when I am away. It is interesting to see how much we can leave out of the modules in the pilot course and what is essential to keep in.

Whilst I am busy with admin the second group begins to deliver services to their communities and the first group acts as their supervisors. The second group can watch them and emulate them as they educate. It is perfect to know that they are being looked after in

the community and that they have such good role models with them constantly to help them as they learn. Eventually I fly off.

I am the constant worrier so I have all these concerns on my mind. I wonder how everything will turn out without me. Some friends call me a control nut. Perhaps I am. But when the plane takes off I realise that everyone is responsible for their own selves. And I have to have trust and faith in God. I sit back and attempt to unwind. I meditate. It helps.

I spend two weeks of my trip with my sisters Ann and Irene who want to know about Mosaic and how things are going. Ann, an amazing business woman who knows about budgets and figures, helps me to work out strategies for Mosaic and I appreciate her knowledge. She gives me good advice with proposal writing. We spend time as sisters and enjoy being together

In Los Angeles Peter fetches me. We travel to their home in La Quinta which is set on a golf course. It is a beautiful home and I am happy to see where they live. They make me feel welcome. While I am with the Biehls, Peter organises meetings and groups in Los Angeles for me to make fundraising presentations about Mosaic. On the way from La Quinta we discuss the way in which I will present to the funders about Mosaic. I am very nervous. I have some slides that I brought with me of our work that we do at Mosaic. Peter says that he hopes there is a computer and a screen.

Unfortunately when we arrive at the venue in LA they cannot get the slide projector and the screen to co-ordinate. I am panicking and I am worried. Everyone has to strain to see the slides which are projected onto a makeshift screen. It is not ideal and not professional. I am embarrassed.

It is difficult to talk to Americans about Africa and the conditions that black people live in here. They do not have a point of reference. However, the feedback that I receive about Mosaic and my information about our services and our community workers are good. I am happy to receive a positive response, especially after the fiasco with the slides. I am hopeful that Peter's contacts will support Mosaic. From this meeting it seems that we shall have an article printed in the Journal *Reflections* in their 'Fall' edition. This is great news.

The three days with the Biehls are over too quickly. Our time together allows us to get to know about each other and our families. We talk about Mosaic and our needs. My trip is inspiring. I was exhausted when I began my journey but I am much more relaxed than when I started out almost a month ago. How fortunate that I am able to visit my sisters and the Biehls.

Now I fly back to Cape Town. And it is back to work.



The Biehls with me on my visit to the States

Moving in the Right Direction

It is now the end of August and I am back in class with my community workers on my first Friday morning in Cape Town. They are delighted to have me back and I am happy to see them too. There is so much that we have to tell each other and, as always, time just disappeared. They are delighted with their gifts and they enjoy seeing the pictures and hearing about my time in Los Angeles with the Biehls.

At this Friday morning's supervision I want to know how the second group of women behaved in class with Caroline and Sheilla. They are both happy with their trainees and the lesson plans. The learners are doing well.

During Fridays when the community workers come to class they share their difficult client's stories with the group when they need their help. The clients' names are not mentioned. I always ask them how they are feeling. Sometimes they say they are fine and we all say 'you do not look fine'. Everyone knows how to 'read' each other non-verbally. These Friday supervision periods are extremely useful for all of us. Firstly they bring us all together and they are informative both personally and work wise. Today they share how they have managed to turn their clients' worries and problems into success stories. It is good to hear what they experienced with their clients while I was overseas. After sharing their stories we praise each of them for helping heal and change their client's lives around.

Sheilla shares with us first. *"During the time that you were away my 16 year old client came to me distressed and tearful. She is still in school and she is pregnant by her boyfriend. He denied that he was responsible. She could see her future just disappearing before her eyes. She went to his home and begged him to not stop loving her and her unborn baby. He made fun of her in front of his friends. She said that she was a laughing stock and she was devastated. Then I counselled her and she started taking responsibility of her own life. When the baby is born she will make arrangements to go to the Maintenance office for child support. She will ask her mom if she can look after the baby so she can go back*

to school. The way that she was taking charge made me feel so proud of her. I supported, congratulated and praised her and she told me that her life has meaning again. She now sees herself going higher and higher at school and when she left me she was walking on clouds."

Noxolo's face tells us that she had a successful counselling session with her client. *"Last Monday I had a client who took out a Protection Order against her mother and her sister. She was especially angry with her sister who has done terrible things to her. She is staying with friends and is not even staying with her family. She threatened to burn her mother's shack and then kill herself afterwards. I counselled her. I asked her to write her story so that she can channel her anger. I also asked her if I could meet with her mother to do conflict resolution with them both. I met with them. Through the conflict resolution a number of things were sorted out. This week after our meeting her mother couldn't thank me enough because she was able to win her daughter back. She said that she was delighted and could not believe that there were people like me who do not judge her and put the blame on her as the mother. She could not stop hugging her daughter. And her sister could not stop crying tears of joy to be with her sister again. I am pleased that my young client moved back home again and things seem to be fine."*

Then Lulu shares her story. *"While you were away I met my client. She told me that her husband drinks and as soon as he has alcohol in his body he changes and becomes very abusive towards her. The weekend before he came home and beat her up. He became very violent when she tried to defend herself. He kicked in the doors and damaged their house. She called the police and had him locked up. After that he blamed her for the breakup of their marriage because he and none of his family have been in jail. She also blamed herself for being too hasty. During counselling she and I prepared an assertiveness interaction so that she knew what she was going to say to him and how she was going to say it. She wanted me to speak to him. I gave her a letter of appointment to give to him for couple counselling. On Monday they both turned up for the appointment. Lots of assumptions and accusations were shared. During the session she managed to change the manner of talking to him and he learnt how to communicate with her. Their relationship seems to have greatly improved."*

Hilda's story is also empowering *"My client came to me very depressed. After counselling her I learnt that at 15 years old she was forced to marry someone who she didn't know. She obeyed her parent's orders and learnt to love him. After they had their fourth child he started to change. He physically abused her and her*

kids and wasn't supporting them. She had to ask her neighbours for help. Through counselling her she decided to apply for a Protection Order and Maintenance. We also practiced an assertiveness interaction. When she got the Protection Order she came back to me. The fact that she did something for herself brought her self-confidence and self-worth. She has since joined a sewing group and can now earn a little bit of money. She has a dream of being a dressmaker one day. The other thing that helped her was that she addressed her husband self-assertively. She can't believe that her husband has completely changed and there's more respect now. She told me that she has grown from this experience."

Jean shares her client's story with us *"My client came to see me. She is from Johannesburg where she stayed with her husband. When she came to me she was in a bad state, groaning and with bitterness in her heart. Her husband abused her since she was a young Makoti. Her husband was a womaniser and had children by other women. He didn't even look after his own six children. He is HIV positive but still has affairs with other women. He then threw her out of her house and she came to Cape Town. Her children were shattered by the abuse. She had to leave her baby daughter with her abusive husband. She is now staying with her sister who referred her to me. I counselled her about abuse and about her worries with her baby daughter. I also opened options about having a blood test done but she is not ready for this. After counselling she was going to apply for a Protection Order and Maintenance. She was going to Johannesburg to fetch her baby daughter with her Protection Order. I was very happy and impressed by hearing such a bold voice from her. She said that Mosaic is a unique organisation. She felt confident and was looking forward to getting a job. She seemed like a different person."*

Caroline, our 'talker', cannot wait to share with us. Firstly she says that she wants to thank me and all of her colleagues for helping her to heal her client's broken life. Caroline says that Mosaic assists her 'a lot' because of all that she learns from the group and from me.

She says that she is amazed that her client comes to her for counselling after being helped by a psychologist and she is only a community worker. Then she reminds us about the story and that her client is a long term client and I know about some of her story. *"I am sure that you remember the first time my client came to me. She literally stumbled into the session and begged me to help her as she could not live with the emotional pain any longer. She told me that a psychologist referred her to Mosaic. I was amazed and I assured her that it was safe to talk to me. She told me that*

her husband severely abuses her and now she suffers from depression. She also came out about her painful childhood and how as a child she had been sexually abused and raped countless times. She never shared this information with anyone before and she often grabbed my hand for safety. I told her during the next session we would practice an assertiveness interaction and then she should be ready to face her mom. We made another date and she practiced it with me. After this session she wanted to sit down with her mom and share her mom's experiences with her. This was a big thing for her to do because she blamed her painful childhood on her mom. After the third session she decided to have an assertive interaction with her husband. She needed to speak up for herself and tell him how she felt. She decided to apply for a Protection Order and Maintenance for her children. And she wanted to get a divorce. At first she had guilt feeling about the marriage vows and the fact that she was a devoted Christian. Once she understood that she had choices it was empowering for her to take responsibility for her own life. By the fourth session which happened this week I hardly even recognised her. She was walking and sitting upright with confidence. And she was also amazed that she could actually hear herself laughing. She was able to eventually accept her past experiences as major lessons that she is eager to learn from. More importantly she has had to forgive her mom where she felt she had failed as a mother. Now they have a relationship for the first time in 34 years."

We listen to each of the client's stories and Dawn is the last person to share. These client stories are important for all of us to learn from and most importantly, for the community workers who need help to counsel their clients. They learn so much and I do too. I learn how great they are as community workers and how proud I am that they are talented and admired as Mosaic counsellors.

We have helped Dawn with her client over many weeks. She reminds us about her client and continues. *"My client's husband is her second husband. He has abused her in every manner including raping her in front of her young daughter. She had a Protection Order against him which the police did not act on. She was depressed and embarrassed to always go to work with bruises and black eyes. So she eventually stopped working. She has no parents or family to support her. When her husband chased her out at night she and her daughter used to run to a friend's house. When I counselled her she was in a lot of pain. She was pregnant and her husband had kicked her in the stomach the day before coming to me. She almost collapsed with the pain. I arranged for her friend's mother to accompany her to the day hospital. I gave her my number at*

home. She returned to her friend's house but she became very ill during the night. When I returned home to my house an urgent message was waiting for me. I summoned an ambulance and on arrival at the hospital she went into the theatre for an emergency operation. The fallopian tube had burst the day before and she lost the baby. I arranged for her daughter to stay at her friend. When she was discharged I got the police to 'assist' her to go home to fetch her clothes. I took her to stay with her friend to recover. I taught my client about abuse and what abusers do to the people they abuse. My client decided to divorce her husband but he never left her in peace. He returned to damage the property and to beat her up. He was jailed but when he got out of jail he stalked her and her daughter again. He sent her threatening letters. She wanted to know why her Protection Order didn't work. She came to see me again last week. She told me that her daughter left little notes for her to find, plotting to kill her stepfather. She went to court to get another Warrant of Arrest and she found out that her Protection Order had been put aside by her husband. She was devastated as she was not given any notice of this. I was in court with her that day and I went to sort this out with the magistrate. He reinstated her application. Her daughter is receiving counselling and she continues to see me. I see her slowly beginning to rebuild her life again."

After supervision we have our final go-around and they all say how interesting today has been. Usually there are one or more stories but today they all share their client's stories. When I ask how they are all feeling, they say that they are fine and happy to have me back. I congratulate them on their counselling.

It is a new day today. My community workers tell me about the clerks in the Grant Offices who are stealing grant money from pensioners. They have some clients whose money has been stolen. It is so sad. These clients cannot work. Some are disabled and some are just too old to work. It is their only money for survival. The community workers say that the clerks erase the old people's names from the computers and then pocket their money. We feel so helpless in the face of such greed, dishonestly, injustice, cruelty and abuse. It is the only funding that the pensioners have, and it is stolen from them by the clerks.

In supervision I ask how the second group is faring in the communities and the women say that they are becoming better and more confident with their presentations. They still need to mentor them but they are improving. I am now looking forward to meeting

with the second group when they attend class. I ask how Sheilla and Caroline feel about training the second group while I was away. They have written notes from the second group and they share their opinions with us. They are all enthusiastic to answer.

Judy G answers me by saying that it was a good experience to be taught by them when I was overseas. She says that everyone behaved and they had no conflicts. She goes on to say that Caroline and Sheilla are good examples as trainers because of the way they were treating them. She says they behaved towards them the same way that I treat them. They used rules that I gave them.

Nita tells Caroline and Sheilla it has been good for them. She says that her class mates respect their trainers and they trained them well. No one took advantage of the trainers while I was not with them.

Portia thanks Caroline and Sheilla for giving them the chance to express their feelings in class with them. She says that “We understand better the way of Love. When it comes to practice it is serious and we are committed to what we are doing. We have a chance to stand up for ourselves and do our work with confidence.”

They all say that the go-arounds are the same as when I run them in class. Their trainers counsel them when they have problems. Nita is surprised that Caroline and Sheilla are not high minded. She says they are just like ‘us’.

I was happy that there was no conflict because they all say that they were sisters together. They learn and share and everything turns out as I hoped it would. I can trust them all. And I am really pleased because Caroline and Sheilla confirm and reassure me that I made the right decision to train them for the job. We are certainly moving in the right direction.

Peter and I work on co-authoring an article about Mosaic and the Amy Biehl Foundation (ABF) for the International Edition of the journal *Reflections* but it is difficult to co-ordinate by fax. I write what we want to include and Peter writes about Amy and her experiences here in Cape Town. Peter decides that the article will be entitled ‘1+10=50,000: in Four and One-Half Months’. I am the ‘1’ and the community workers are the ‘10’ and we reach ‘50,000’ abused clients in four and a half months. The article will appear in November and our women are as excited as I am.

When I next visit our community workers they are running abuse workshops and support groups for their clients. It is easier to get women to commit to workshops as they only last for one day whereas they are required to attend support groups on a regular basis.

Hilda is asked by her priest at St Peter's Church in Khayelitsha to speak about abuse and Mosaic during the church service. There are many women in the congregation who are interested in what Hilda has to say. As a result Hilda runs a support group in the church hall. The priest's wife is interested in Mosaic's work and wants to help her church community. I supervise Hilda at church on Wednesday morning. Although many women drop out of sessions for a variety of reasons Hilda runs the support groups even if only a few people attend. She knows that support groups are the most difficult service to conduct but the benefits to the women are great. On this morning there is a problem getting the key for the hall. I am impressed that Hilda does not give up but persists until the key is found and the problem solved. Not everyone is present and there are mostly elderly women. I can see that they like and respect Hilda. They thrive on the energy, interest and knowledge that Hilda injects into the group. She touches on different issues of abuse, she personalises the information and the women contribute.

We do not have specific venues for our women to use for counselling. They really should find suitable places for women to share their difficult cases of abuse in private. They tell me that many women come to their homes for counselling. It is not easy for their families but they give them a private space in their bedrooms. I am in awe of my community workers who counsel these abused women in their homes. Sometimes it is frightening for my women to counsel at home and they take risks. It worries me because I fear for their safety. However, we do not have another plan for counselling our clients. I encourage them to ask God for protection in the times when they sense danger.

Today in our go-around Bertha shares a frightening story with us. A client comes to Bertha's home for counselling and she does not realise that the abuser enters behind her with a gun. Bertha manages to calm him but he is intent on having his partner back. She speaks

calmly to him and gets him to leave. She is proud of herself. We all echo our praises for her.

Hilda also tells us that during the week she heard loud banging on her front door. She opened the door and a woman rushed past her and hid in her back bedroom. She was escaping from her abuser who tried to catch her and beat her with a heavy stick. The man also rushed into the house behind her. Hilda's husband told him to 'stop' because the house belongs to him and he had better leave quickly. Thank goodness Hilda's husband intervened and the woman is safe with Hilda. The abuser was drunk, rude and aggressive and shouted outside her house that he wanted his partner back. It took a long time to calm him down. He left his frightened partner with Hilda. The woman tells Hilda that when her husband is drunk he threatens and beats her. Hilda is happy because the client says that she will come back to her for counselling. I ask Hilda how it feels to have the client's abusive and drunk husband in her house. She says that she was scared at the time but because of her husband's support, she feels okay.

It is October 1996 and the end of this year is approaching quickly. Days have no substance and they fly by. The women learn and work and serve abused women. Soon it will be the end of another year.

It is exciting to design different forms for our projects. We have just designed an Accumulated Worksheet Form to keep track of what they do in the community because I cannot be with everyone all the time. It will also help us with research. We can record our women's different statistics for their presentations, workshops, support groups, counselling and extra services such as accompanying clients to court. It certainly allows us to see the results of Mosaic's services in an immediately clear way and it gives us a large indication of the work that they do.

We design a Counselling Report Form that helps us record the numbers of our clients and the kinds of problems that they experience. Later on during this year we can do mini research projects to assess how many women are abused physically, sexually, emotionally, verbally and economically, and how many men threaten their partners with guns and knives. All of their recordings will be collected and stored.

Filling in the forms requires a lot of paper work. It is difficult for them to keep on remembering to fill in the forms after giving services. They are slowly learning how to record their statistics. They do not like to fill in the forms and often I get incomplete forms and then I go crazy. It is a slow process. They are slowly learning to record their statistics and the forms are become easier to follow.

This week we have an interesting week. As a committee member of NEWAVE, the Network against Violence against Women, I help to organise a two-day workshop on violence against woman. It takes place this week. There are approximately 100 delegates at the workshop. Our women all attend and they are able to see how much they already know. This boosts their confidence and I enjoy seeing them in interaction with other service providers, professionals and grassroots women from the community. During the workshop they participate in discussions, contribute information and network with others. In class the next day we 'unpack' the workshop and discuss everything and anything that we found relevant. I am able to tell them how we planned and designed the NEWAVE workshop and they relate to all of this. In our previous module they learnt how to plan and design events and the workshop is a practical example of what they have learnt.

They tell me stories about the other delegates with whom they network and who want to know more about Mosaic. They tell me how impressed the delegates are with our training programme. This morning it is such a heart-warming exercise of recapping and sharing. And the whole workshop experience contributes greatly to their knowledge and self-esteem. Now they understand and relate to everything more easily having learnt it in practice first in the classroom and now in the community.

During 1996 our community workers continually increase their number of venues and they bring in many clients. Mosaic is slowly becoming known in the different communities. Because our community workers are reliable and knowledgeable, women who are abused seek their support. After their presentations abused women will often come up to our women and ask if they can see them. We are all happy at the number of clients who they counsel. We record them all.

Journal October 1996

‘Martine my precious child bought Mosaic a photocopying machine with her inheritance money received from Lawrence’s parents. The machine arrived yesterday and I have put it into the newly tidied middle room / office. It fits in wonderfully. It is an amazingly thoughtful and generous gift and we are all overwhelmed and overjoyed.

Yesterday she came into class with our women and everyone gave her big warm hugs of thanks. This will avoid me having to go into town to photocopy each time. It is such a luxury. Teen was determined to do this. It is quite something spending her inheritance on a gift for Mosaic. I am so thankful to her.’

In November I receive the *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping* journal containing our joint article. Our article is called ‘The New Math of Community Work and then $1+10=50,000$ ’. It is very impressive. Peter asks five prominent people in the American Social Work academic field to give their commentaries on the article - professors and associate professors, doctoral students and directors. Their comments are printed at the end of the article. If there were commentaries from South African academics I would have taken the remarks differently because South Africans know the situation in our country.

They write about how the work that Mosaic now performs combines with the work that Amy would have wanted to achieve. There is mention of Mosaic building a commitment to a new community and to grassroots women who have to be skilled and knowledgeable to work for their own liberation. One commentator talks of the Mosaic project as being a most impressive effort to deal with South Africa’s most serious problem, engaging the problem at community levels where change in abusive practice must take place. Another commentator talks about the great risk to Mosaic as it is without sufficient funding for continued training and payment for the community workers. Another feels that the use of the term ‘Mamas’ in the joint article is patronising and he is not comfortable hearing the term used by white women for black women. However, our black community workers respectfully call older women ‘mama’ and younger women ‘sissie’. Hilda, being older than most of our women is called ‘Mama Hil’. This name is used in the townships to

address older women as well. It is difficult for Americans to comment on the situation in Africa. They do not have a real community reference to make comments.

I put the journal inside my desk drawer and tell them they can take it and read it at any time. They are happy that they are featured by name in some of the commentaries. We are delighted to be included in *Reflections* with the article on Amy and Mosaic. My contribution is accurately recorded.

The Biehls also produce a 1996 Xmas card with our picture on it which was taken on the first day at Mosaic. They send it to their donors who support the Amy Biehl Foundation in the States. They send us 50 cards to distribute to service providers here.

Before the Xmas break we have a party at my home in Sea Point for my community workers. I pack up individual parcels for them to take home. We have no money so the parcels are modest and I wish I could be more generous and give them more. It is sad for me and disappointing for them but it comes out of my pocket and they understand. I give them a small amount of money as well.

And so 1996 passes and we are all looking forward to our break after a long and busy year. We hug each other goodbye and wish each other a happy Xmas and a safe and joyful holiday.

For me, 1997 looms ahead. I am not as excited as I was at the end of 1996 because I have so much work to do and so many women at Mosaic at the moment.

We have the second group who I will train and supervise next year along with Caroline and Sheilla. I will also supervise our first group of community workers in their different venues. It is not what I expected to happen at the beginning of 1996. However for now we will have an extended group of Mosaic community workers and I hope that it will go well for Mosaic and for the community.

After one year our lease is up at 4 Church Square. We do not renew it and are able to find premises at the Uluntu Centre in Gugulethu. Church Square is now too small for us with all the volunteers that we have to train. This new address is a bigger venue for all of us and it is easier for the trainees to travel to it in the township. The only drawback is that it is not our room and we cannot

leave our belongings in the room. It is a community venue. However, we are all happy to move to Guguletu.

The Second Group

Now it is 1997. Everyone is well and happy to be back together from our holidays but I am very worried. We are virtually bankrupt again.

We gather amazing friends to stand on Mosaic's Board of Directors. Gloria de Villiers becomes Chairperson and when she resigns Frank Manley becomes Chairperson. Sheryl Ozinsky, Nolwandle Mgoqi, Myrtle Berman, Hannah Reeve Sanders, Lutfia Vayej, Nombulelo Mkefa, and Lisa Chait sit on our Board of Directors. Each one is recognised and respected in our community. They will rescue me and Mosaic with their support and guidance from difficult situations in future because we are young and inexperienced in the world of NGOs.



The Board busy with their Director's meeting at my home

The second group who are being trained by Caroline and Sheilla are going to want to be employed by Mosaic at the end of their training course. With seriously limited funding I shall not be able to

employ all of them. It will be a huge problem because now that they are included in the training it is going to be difficult to let them go. If we continue to be bankrupt I dread telling them later this year that some of them will have to leave.

There are sixteen new women who are mentored by ten community workers and brought into Mosaic by them. I would not have chosen some of them. Although some are intelligent and hard workers, I do not think that they are all going to be right for Mosaic. It will not be easy for me to work with some of them.

I have to get used to their names. Some have Xhosa names which are unusual for me to remember. They are Zintatu, Nomvuzo, Zoleka, Lungiswa and Nomonde. The other volunteers have English names and they may be easier for me to remember. They are Primrose, two Judiths, Eunice, Gladys, Nita, Mia, Leonorah, Josephine, Valencia and Terry. I have to learn how to put names to their faces when I join them in the class.

My timetable works out well and I can fit both groups into the days of the week. I see the second group on Mondays and Wednesdays for their classroom learning with Caroline and Sheilla and they accompany our community workers on Tuesdays and Thursdays into the community. They are 'off' on Fridays when I see my first group of community workers in class and ask them how the second group are succeeding with educating in the community venues. On Fridays they tell me that the volunteers are improving and they are happy with most of their performances. They enjoy being with them. They supervise them in the community for March and April 1997.

I inform the second group that in May and June they will change their community workers and will not accompany the community workers who they regularly work with. I want to give the other community workers the chance to assess them. Nobody looks happy when I change things around. It has become easy for them and now they are going to be challenged again.

By the end of June the new trainees are back in the classroom with me having been working with their new community workers for two months. I ask them how it was for them to present in the different communities, with different community workers and with

different languages. How did they feel? Did they learn new things? Were they happy to have a new mentor?

I give everyone a piece of paper and I ask them to write sentences about their work experience with their new community workers. The room grows quiet while they write. It is good to have a quiet period where I can observe them and intuitively gauge how they are doing. They are keen to put their experiences into writing and everyone is busy thinking and writing.

Zoleka writes *“It is the 20th May and my first day with Caroline, who is my new community worker. I don’t even finish the presentation because there are so many questions especially from the men. What empowers me is Caroline’s support. When I talk she nods her head and she smiles. Firstly I am nervous because I don’t know if I am giving the right answers. But my presentation is easy. I feel powerful and sure because I know that these people need help from me. I am using Caroline’s experience from her presentations. Now I am there answering them. I feel good with her watching me. In the workshop that I do with Caroline we make people first aware of what we are going to talk about. She has such an energy level and she talks and people all participate. I also want to talk and not stop talking. We take three hours to do the workshop. In the workshop we all learn a lot from people’s experiences of abuse. They share about their pasts and tell us everything that has happened to them. We tell them this is called ‘abuse’. They don’t know it is abuse and it is the first time that they hear it and accept it. We make it clear about the kinds of abuse and the causes of abuse. They ask us for advice and Caroline says we that we don’t give advice. We give services to help abused women and help them to stop the abuse. Caroline and my other community worker Jean, are so good. I wish I can be more like them.”*

Also in May, Lungiswa shares *“It was a wonderful experience working with my new community worker Lulu. She welcomed us with love and showed us her room where she sees her clients. When we went into the venue at the clinic she asked us to put up our signs of Abuse and the Cycle of Violence for the presentation. Before we even start our presentation she asks us all to pray. That was my first learning. Then going to stand in front of the audience with energy and feeling that I wasn’t alone, God was around me. I could not believe that it was me who did the presentation. I have never been like this before. When I finished Sis Lulu hugged me tight and I could feel myself having tears because I wondered how I had done. Her comments were encouraging and she said that the way I expressed myself was like the ‘feelings’ that I have experienced. I really felt*

good. The audience were co-operative and they learnt from the presentation. Then we went to the Maternity Obstetrics Unit at the hospital and to the police station and to the TB clinic. We had a hard time at the clinic. People came in bit by bit but they were called out to the doctor's rooms and from the rooms to the other passages. I found it difficult to present as I had to zigzag for those who were in the passage. Sis Lulu asked me to stop as she could see that there was chaos and no order. She went to talk to the sister in charge and then we left. All in all it has been very exciting to be with Lulu on my first day in the community."

Josephine from Mbekweni that is close to Paarl now works with Lulu in Gugulethu and says "All I can say is that it was a great pleasure to work with Lulu. She is a very kind person who is easily reached by everyone and very concerned about her work. Truly speaking I was afraid of working with Lulu thinking that she is very hard but she is not. She is easy to work with and accepts other people."

Judy G writes about being with her new community worker Hilda. "As for my new community worker she was as good as Lulu was for me. When Rolene said we had to change community workers I was nervous. The following Tuesday I did the presentation with Hilda and I was confident. There was a lot of feedback from the audience and that made me feel great. At first I was a little bit nervous because there was no order. My community worker told me not to be nervous and I asked God for his White Light and I did it. We went to the Triple Trust where Hilda did a workshop perfectly and she used the simple Xhosa words not mixed with English so that everybody understood her. When I did the presentation she asked a lot of questions to see if I was sure of what I was doing. It was really good because I learnt a lot of things. I also had to be punctual because Hilda is very concerned about time. The other thing I have learnt is to hold the cards much higher so that people can see the abuse words written on them. In our clinics we put them on the wall. Hilda and Lulu are the same kind of people and I enjoyed working with both of them."

Leonora's shares about her new community worker. "I see Hilda, my new community worker the same way that I see Dawn, Caroline and Sheilla. Hilda is very humble. She is good at her work and looks after her clients while we are doing presentations. She doesn't have any jealousy towards us even as we are new trainees for her. I learn a lot from her because in Mitchells Plain when you say to the people "Please keep quiet" they listen to you but in Site C with Hilda they make a lot of noise. I had to raise my voice firstly. It was difficult but I just concentrated on what I was doing. I applied my skills there. I also learnt to

be flexible at Mosaic. I applied my observing skills by looking at the other mamas and I said to myself that they are having a lot of problems. I explained more to them. They took my cards with my name and Mosaic's name written on them and they promised to be there again the following weekend. The people there were calling us social workers."

Primrose writes *"I feel good when I am doing Mosaic work. I like to do presentations, workshops and class work. I do my best with women who are participating a lot and men asking lots of questions. I feel great and I don't have nerves in front of the people. But I also feel bad when I have to get up early to go to class or the community in the early morning, preparing to go out but without electricity. I have to wash with cold water on cold rainy mornings. It is worse when I have no soap to wash myself and no roll-on as I work with people. It is also painful not to have food to eat, no bread, hot water, no sugar and hot tea. When I come home I feel hungry and tired. My colleagues in our class always give me something to eat. At night I have to ask my neighbours for something to eat. It is better when we have Fridays and Saturdays off from Mosaic so that I can char and get money for bus fare and lunch for my kids and something at home. It is now eight months that we are trainees. It is painful because there are three more months earning nothing but working hard for long hours and walking long distances because Mosaic has no money for us while we are training. Sometimes I think I can't cope. I feel sad when I think of not graduating and not being employed as we are being trained full time for a long period and earning nothing. But I like Mosaic's work in the community because it is very useful and helpful."*

Gladys writes *"It was good to be with Jean, a new community worker who I was not used to being with and talking to. By changing the community worker it gave me an experience of committing myself to the work. It was like I am working at a new job by doing my best seeing someone observing me the way I am working. She did things the same as my other community worker. I have to project my voice as much as I could so that everyone can hear what I am saying. I also explained as much as I could so that there were not too many questions. I learnt a lot with Jean in Macassar Township today".*

Eunice shares *"First of all I was very frightened when I heard that I am going to work with Dawn because she is not a person I am used to. The other thing that made me unhappy was that I would work with the coloureds in Mitchells Plain and they mostly speak Afrikaans. I can't speak Afrikaans. I was nervous because first I learnt to present in English and then I worked with the Xhosa community and I educated the people in Xhosa. Now I was going to*

have to teach the coloureds in English again. And it made me unhappy. I went to Mitchells Plain with Judy S my fellow trainee on the first day to meet Dawn who welcomed us with warm hands and was ever smiling in the community. She likes her work. She was very busy the whole of that first Tuesday. The clients were too much, her hands were full and we found ourselves working with her. Everybody who was there was asking where is Dawn? Are you with Dawn? Others were crying because of their problems, others were giving us messages for Dawn. It was a very busy day. The second Thursday we went to the day clinic. Judy was the first to present explaining thoroughly and the people were listening carefully. Judy was better than me because she understands Afrikaans. Dawn had to interpret for me but it was great. Judy explained what Mosaic does and the nursing sister in charge was showing the most interest. The clinic was very full and whether they were making a noise or not Judy did the presentation.

“Then it was my turn. I was a little nervous. But I did it. I saw that the people were listening to me and I felt empowered. Dawn gave me feedback that my body language was right but I must not move around too much and I must wait for them to answer if I ask questions. She also said I must explain more about Mosaic and abuse. She said I must take my time. Dawn was helping us. When we were finished we went to another church. Dawn started the workshop and the church was full. It was a very interesting workshop and took about two hours. After we finished Dawn had to counsel a client in the court. Then we left her because after that she was going to counsel another woman in Merrydale. Dawn is a very busy community worker. I would like to be busy like her. It was very good for me to work with another community worker because we learnt a lot. It showed me that they all get their good training from Rolene.”

Zintatu works with Jean in the townships and now she has to go out to Paarl to work with Alice. *“I shall never forget the first presentation Alice did at the clinic. She explained the services that we give. She explained to the people that she also gives counselling on their own to them to help them with their problems. She spoke about workshops and support groups. She was patient and told them about Mosaic. She explained things carefully. Her tone of voice, and energy level and body language were just appropriate. Alice spoke about partnerships, working together, and we need our volunteers to help each other. If the other person is not presenting well, then the people will criticise us and say “Those people from Mosaic”.*

“When I did my presentation at the clinic I felt good. I could feel within myself that it is Rolene who dwells in me and in my community worker. It is her

training that gives a wonderful woman like Alice her knowledge and understanding of what she is doing. I found it even easier speaking true Xhosa that was grammatically correct. I felt at ease being among the people and my body language, eye contact and energy level were there. It was because of the information that I was also getting from my community worker that helped me. We did a workshop where everyone participated. That was wonderful. I presented the Cycle of Violence and I felt like I was another me from the energy that God provided me with. My community worker presents the different kinds of abuse and she did it well. After the workshop we went to the radio station. They are interested in Mosaic's services. They promised to call Alice and twice a month she can deal with different topics at their studio. Alice handled us instantly and if we did something wrong she tried to do her best to tell it assertively but instantly. She is frank and when we did something well she would say something positive to us. Alice is a very kind and understanding woman. For me it is a wise thing to rotate community workers for our learning."

Mia also works with Alice and she learns a lot from her *"I enjoyed working with Alice. It has been a new learning experience. Alice gives so much of herself. She has determination and drive. On our first day together she was not feeling too well but she had a lot planned for the day. She was determined to finish what she had started. I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with her. I appreciate that she gives feedback shortly after a presentation or workshop. I never knew that I tend to speak too softly sometimes. It helped me to try and improve. I've learnt the importance of follow-ups first hand and how to be patient when doing that. The importance is to also have my diary at hand to keep dates and contact names. We never know who can be of assistance and who can be of help to us again. One policeman at Mbekweni police station wanted Alice to counsel his wife. She is a very good role model. People have respect for Alice and trust her. The community looks up to her"*.

Nomonde says *"It is a privilege to work with Alice. She learns about how to help people applying for Protection Orders in the Court and helping women write affidavits. She sees how it helps abused women, especially those who only speak Xhosa. At the clinic Alice counsels a psychiatrist and it is my first experience for a community worker to counsel a psychiatrist. Alice also counsels a retarded client who puts her trust in Alice and she makes her calm. I am pleased that I worked with Alice."*

The trainees learn a lot and they see that all of their mentors work in the same way and praise their mentors. I am pleased that the

change in their community workers is so successful. Although I have been strict with the first group of community workers they are now successful and work well in Mosaic's way of working. This impresses the new trainees. It sets a tone for how Mosaic expects them all to work, with commitment, drive and passion and giving the correct information about abuse.

Caroline, Sheilla and I continue to train the second group in the Modules that our first group was trained in. I mostly observe them as Caroline and Sheilla train. They write their tests and each day they fill in their Evaluation Forms where they highlight the things that they are not clear about.



Picture of me with the first and second groups in Uluntu Guguletu

*Back row: Lungiswa, Alice, Nomvuzo, Judy, Lulu, Leonora, Primrose,
Mia, Zintatu, Jean. Front row: Me, Hilda, Caroline, Dawn, Sheilla, Josephine*

Working with confidentiality, there are so many stories of violence and sadness that they share with us. I am amazed by the trust that they have in each other in order to share these stories. They are deeply private experiences. It is heavy and sad to listen to them reveal the explanations of what happens to them.

One trainee tells us that the exercise is 'very touchy' and reminds her about 'far behind' when she is very young. Her mother leaves her and her siblings at home with their father every weekend. Her father is a loving father and spoils them. A man comes to fetch her mother

in his black car and they go to the country. The man is the cause of the separation and 'the death between her parents'. This man causes suffering and takes the love of their parents away. Her father and mother go their separate ways. This man comes to stay with them in their new home. Her father cannot cope and he takes the children to his sister's house so his wife does not know where they are. When they are with their aunt they do not know where their parents are and what is happening to them. She tells us that she is also so young to have to look after her younger brothers and sister. But then she says that the starvation and the hunger is the worst of it. She has to clean sheep's heads to make a little bit of money for them so that they can eat. Her father loves her mother so much that he cannot bear the pain. Her father who she loves so much dies by hanging himself. She realises that everything that happens to her is her mother's fault. There is still so much more to her story but she says she has had enough of the sharing. She is visibly trembling. We thank her for being so brave. I tell her that the sharing will be beneficial for her because now it is out she can be counselled and deal with it to heal herself.

This story opens the flood gates to sharing. One of our women tells us that as a young girl she is raped by a policeman while he is on duty. He forces her into a toilet and makes her remove her panties. She is still traumatised by the event. Another trainee is raped by her uncle when she is seven years old. And several of them are sexually molested and some are almost raped. One tries to commit suicide. And there are only about four out of the sixteen women who have had happy childhoods.

I obviously do not show it but I am shocked by the abuse that they still carry with them emotionally and psychologically. I did not realise that this group is so traumatised. They will counsel each other during our counselling module and their mentors will also have to counsel them. This is also why the counselling module cannot be shortened. There is a lot of work that has to be completed on personal levels with these women.

When they finish sharing their stories of abuse, I lead them through the Inner Child healing meditation. They go back in time to find their little Selves. They hug them closely. They love and kiss

them and tell them how much they appreciate and care for them. They tell their little Selves that they understand the trauma and pain that they have been through. But now it is over and in the past. They cannot let the trauma interfere with their future. They have grown stronger from the trauma and they are survivors. They must come to realise that nothing that happened to them was caused by 'themselves'. They cannot feel guilt or anger at 'themselves'. The perpetrators will be penalised as they hand themselves over to God one day.

After the meditation they sit quietly and I allow the silence to continue. Some of the women have never shared their stories before so this exercise is pretty strong medicine. It is valuable for them to dig deep and find their personally undisclosed childhood traumatic events. It has been a tough session but they have survived.

I give them writing homework this weekend where they have to write down anything else that they need to say but did not share with the group. I give them paper to write on so that they can share what has happened to them. They will bring these into class next week.

In their Evaluation Forms at the end of the day I pick up that the Inner Child exercise is commented on by all of them. They all write that they feel so much better after listening to their colleague's stories and sharing their own. It is heartening for me. I felt uncomfortable hearing their stories and wondering how they would feel afterwards. These women are tough and courageous. In their writings that they do for homework I have one who writes that the stories that her colleagues share with the group are heart-breaking. Another writes that she finds the pain during the session to be almost unbearable.

We work through this with different exercises and this coming week we shall again address their experiences. This time I do exercises with them to address their anger. I bring lots of newspaper to class. I place them in the middle of their circle. They tear the newspapers into tiny shreds as they allow themselves to express their anger. We stop only when there is a confetti of paper bits and they feel more comfortable.

The week before the Easter Weekend of April 1997 has once again been full of Mosaic. I am called into a most exciting meeting at the Department of Social Services in town by Fido who holds an

important position in the Department. I meet with her, two men from the Directorate and two women named Marieta and Ulrika. They all seem very interested in Mosaic and the training and services that we offer.

I am particularly happy to meet Marieta and Ulrika. Whenever I talk about Mosaic people ask me if I know about them and they tell me that these are the two women that I need to speak to. Now they are both in the meeting. During the meeting I am almost too scared to breathe or move because I am out of my depth. For years I have struggled to find a place for us with the Government and at this meeting the doors open without my having to do anything. As I observe everyone I can see that they certainly know what they are doing and they are keen to support Mosaic. I am consulted from time to time but most of the time everyone talks past me and discusses the project and organises what they can offer Mosaic. They bend over backwards and offer us funding for an Organisational Development workshop at the end of this month. Marieta and Ulrika offer to help us with the workshop. I am stunned and overwhelmed with gratitude.

The men from the Directorate then ask me how I think that Mosaic and the Department can work together. I say that Mosaic will provide abuse services in the community where the Department is not operating. My wish is that Mosaic becomes the recognised training institution for community workers and Social Auxiliary Workers.

As I get back into the car I take a piece of paper and I start writing down as much as I can remember. I want to capture as much of the information as soon as possible. This meeting feels like Heaven on Earth. It is surreal.

I am so emotionally moved after the meeting that I drive straight to Zerban's Cake and Coffee Shop and I buy a huge chocolate brandy cake. As soon as I get home Teen and I promptly eat half of it and jump around the kitchen like fleas. We are beyond excited because Mosaic is now on the move.

When I get back to class I tell my community workers about the meeting with Government. They are very excited. We are such a new organisation and the Organisational Development workshop is great for us. We do not know how to form or develop an organisation.

Marieta and Ulrika will help us to become a properly established NGO.

Marieta and I meet during the week to plan for and structure the workshop. I am optimistic that if Marieta and Ulrika are integrally involved at the beginning of our development then they will want to be a part of us and our future. We discuss the venue and the date and time of the workshop. The Government will pay for food and the resources for all of us. She and Ulrika look forward to meeting the community workers.

It is a beautiful winter day and the sun shines brightly. It is perfect weather for this momentous occasion. The community workers are all dressed smartly and they are eager to begin the workshop. From the start Marieta and Ulrika ask us many questions. They can see that we have passion and enthusiasm but structurally we are very weak. We need a mission statement and a vision for Mosaic. We have no idea of organograms or strategic roles, responsibilities and plans for Mosaic or how to start to create and develop an organisation. We cannot exist on passion and enthusiasm alone and we really need their experience and guidance. We have to work this out.

While we have our lunch Marieta and Ulrika stay in the room busy with strategic plans that they draw onto large pieces of paper. They draw out the structure for us. They draw out our dreams and aspirations and put it all onto paper. During the afternoon we discuss what they plan for us. We are learning so much. In truth we are so naïve and can never form an organisation without them. We are awestruck with what they do for Mosaic.

At tea time Marieta comes and sits with us on a low wall outside the training room. We all bask in the winter sunshine. Everyone is quite tired by now and we all talk quietly to each other. I ask Marieta about her work with Government and she tells me that she is leaving her position. I am really surprised. I boldly grab the opportunity and ask her if she would ever consider working for Mosaic. I can hardly believe that I have done this. At this stage for me Marieta is in another league. Asking her to 'lower her standards' and work with a newly formed and extremely young organisation is crazy. I am certain that it is too belittling for her to contemplate. But to have her experience

and expertise especially working with funding, projects and proposals could be outstanding and 'life saving' for us.

Marieta says she is going overseas in October and will think about it if Mosaic gives her the time to travel. She is going to have to work off her notice period with Government but she will give me a call and let me know about her decision. I thank her but do not think that it will materialise.

During the week Marieta calls me. I feel frightened to hear her voice and her final decision. But miracles of miracles she says that she accepts our offer to come to Mosaic as my Assistant Director. What spectacular news this is for all of us. With her acceptance Mosaic has just been elevated to another category and stature. Our community workers are overjoyed. We are so very lucky.

The problem is to find enough money to pay her for what she wants to receive. I keep on thinking it is serendipitous that she runs the workshop, tells me that she is resigning and now accepts the offer to work at Mosaic.

It must be in God's greater plan for her and for us. We shall have to make a plan financially. But it is so wonderful. I want to shout it from the roof tops. Marieta is coming to work at Mosaic. Wow.

Promises

It is the Sunday evening of the Easter Weekend in April 1997. I receive a call from Michael Jospe, an ex-South African who lives in the United States and is at present in Cape Town. He is a psychologist at the California School of Professional Psychology (CSPP) in Los Angeles who emigrated many years ago. Michael sounds friendly, and professional. He read about Mosaic in an article in the Los Angeles Times to commemorate the 3rd anniversary of Amy Biehl's death in 1993 and is interested in the story of Mosaic and wants to hear more about it.

Michael tells me about a specific project that he wants CSPP to adopt that he feels will be extremely beneficial for our abused clients. We agree to meet in a coffee shop in town so that he can explain it in more detail and he can learn more about Mosaic. I immediately like and trust Michael from the moment we meet. He asks me about Mosaic, what we are doing and what our needs are for our clients and then tells me that he believes the project that he wants to bring to us is perfect for our needs. The aim of the project is to train six black nurses from South Africa in a course in mental health care at CSPP in the States. Once they complete their three months of training they will return to South Africa to assist abused clients. The project will become a referral resource and an extension of Mosaic's services. Many of our abused clients suffer from hypertension, anxiety attacks, paranoia and other mental and emotional disorders. The knowledge and experience that the nurses will gain through this training will go a long way to help our clients cope with the conditions that they suffer from by living with abusive partners.

As I listen to Michael I feel a light inside me burn brightly. I am excited with his proposal. Nurses from Gugulethu and Khayletisha as well as from Kwazulu Natal will be trained in assessment and diagnostic skills and the treatment of psychopathology. Our staff will work together with these trained nurses to give a holistic service to abused women.

In addition, and most importantly, Michael wants the project to include a research component where students from CSPP will come to Mosaic in an exchange programme to do research looking at the effects of a programme such as ours on family relationships, on women's stress management and their physical health.

Aside from the fact that we need South African research on women's issues, there is very little research done in South Africa. Our clients and our country will benefit from socially and culturally appropriate research results. We often have to quote overseas research statistics and very often they are not a true reflection of what happens in our 'so-called' third world communities. Michael also puts forward the viewpoint that Mosaic will become the effective anchor for CSPP's mental health service's training initiative.

I share the news of the Michael's meeting with my community workers. They are also excited as it is something that we would never have imagined happening to us. Their services along with the nurses' expertise will be fundamental to healing our clients. What an exciting project this is and what amazing project partners we would have in CSPP. But there is still a lot of work to discuss and consider in making it materialise.

Of course the issue of funding is key to establishing this project. Michael says that CSPP will train the nurses for free but we have to source funding for travel, accommodation and other expenses associated with the training. He asks me if I know of anyone to whom we could send a funding proposal.

I immediately fax Peter Biehl and tell him about Michael and the proposal he has brought to us and ask if he knows of anyone who we can approach to fund this ambitious project. Peter agrees to put forward the proposal to two congressmen he knows in Washington who are in charge of the allocations of funds for South Africa for development projects. He also knows the administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Amy worked with this administrator in Washington for some time before coming out to South Africa. The administrator suggests that Peter and Michael go to Washington over the weekend to meet with him. During the same visit they will also meet with the Congressmen and find out if they can all help us.

I can hardly contain my emotions. Because I am a visionary, my horizons expand and encompass the whole of South Africa, where the nurses and Mosaic can help and heal the scourge of woman abuse. I cannot believe that this can now become a tangible possibility.

During the day the faxes fly back and forth between the three of us. Michael and Peter are preparing for the meeting with USAID and I am giving them information as they ask for it. I have to give Michael my viewpoints and my needs so that he can include them in the proposal. I work on the document until 2.30 am. When I get into my bed I cannot sleep as my mind is wildly busy with the project. I pray to God that this wonderful project will transpire. Please God. Please God.

Peter and Michael fly to Washington and meet with the Administrator of USAID, the Assistant Secretary of Social Services and other decision makers. I anxiously wait for feedback from them. At last they call and tell me that the meeting was extremely successful. The grant for the CSSP and the Mosaic Nurses' Project is approved in memory of Amy. A grant of two million rand will be allocated to this project from USAID's Eastern Cape budget. Peter will have to contact USAID offices in Pretoria and we shall all have to meet to discuss the details of how this is going to work out. It seems as if everything is falling perfectly into place. I am way out of my league once more when it comes to knowing and meeting influential people from the States. We are blessed to have Peter and Michael helping us.

There are no adequate words to describe our elation and gratitude. We cannot believe our good fortune. All of our hard work and commitment will now be rewarded and Mosaic will become an NGO with the best services for women who are beaten and abused. It is just phenomenal. Each time I think of what is taking place my heart races and I hyperventilate. I have to force myself to calm down and breathe slowly and pray that nothing goes wrong with this project.

It is the end of June 1997. The Biehls arrive in Cape Town for the Amnesty Hearings to be held on the 8th and 9th of July. They will also meet with us and the USAID officials about the two million rand

grant for the Nurse's Project that USAID, Mosaic and the Biehls still have to debate. The Biehls bring their friends from the States with them and we fetch them from the airport. It is the coldest, rainiest, most miserable day and it is pouring buckets but we do not allow this to dampen our spirits. We are there waiting to welcome them, including Teen and her fiance Larry who help transport all of our women to the airport.

We take the Biehls and their friends back to their hotel to freshen up and rest for a while. Later on I call for them and bring them home for Friday night supper. We spend a happy evening together and they keep on saying how wonderful it is to be in my home to experience a Sabbath meal and to see how I live. They say that it gives them a completely different understanding of me as a person. It is strange but after all this time of being together I do not think that they ever know that I am Jewish.

The following day I take them around the community to show them where we work. On Sunday, we all go into Gugulethu to Father Basil's church for morning service. Then I take the Biehls and their friends in my minibus and drive them around Gugulethu, Nyanga, Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain. Dawn and Caroline are in the minibus with us and we show our visitors all the places that we work in. We give them information about the townships as well as information about Mosaic. I know that they find the township visit interesting. It is important to meet these visitors and show them what we are doing.

The week is insanely busy again. Apart from the wonderful sight-seeing trips for our visitors around our magnificent peninsula, I am busy with the first group of community workers and supervising their services in the community. The second group of trainees are in the middle of their written and oral exams. I have written the papers but I still have to monitor them for their exams and mark the papers at home. At times I do not know where to place myself as there are so many things happening all at once.

Marieta is now my Assistant Director and has just started working with me. Before coming to Mosaic she worked for eleven years with the Grant Applications Division of the Department of Social Development in Cape Town. She is experienced and

professional and has spent many years working with organisations' proposals and major funders regarding grant applications. She is such an asset to Mosaic. I am grateful, especially at this time with USAID in Cape Town for the CSPP project.

On the 4th of July our Fundraising Breakfast goes off effortlessly. I guess I could call it a quietly elegant breakfast. Deputy Councillor Arthur Jacobs sponsors the breakfast and we have some important guests including Consuls General of the USA and China, a representative from USAID, Wendy Ackerman from Pick 'n Pay, and representatives from Southern Life Foundation, Warner Lambert, Eskom, Telkom, Safmarine, de Beers Marine, Pam Golding, Rotary, UJW and our accountants from Bass Gordon Willis. There are representatives from the Department of Welfare including Marieta who has resigned and who imminently joins Mosaic. We are trying to get USAID to pay for her salary.

There are about 60 people who attend the breakfast. Sheryl, the Chairperson of Mosaic's Board says that we must give them a couple of weeks and then follow up. Hopefully the doors will open now. Deputy Councillor Jacobs speaks well and is supportive. He tells us afterwards that he will help us in any way possible.

Peter and Linda speak well. They mention how we have clearly identified the need to assist abused women and are working responsibly to fulfil the need. We are almost better known and sponsored in the USA and local organisations and companies should begin to support us. They are carrying on Amy's work and Mosaic is the perfect organisation for them to support. He says that if anyone joins Mosaic they become part of the Mosaic family.

Peter also says that they are here to dignify the Amnesty hearings on the 8th and 9th of August but the decision is up to South Africa about what happens with those who murdered Amy and they will support their decision. They point to the rehabilitation of offenders and question the problem of knowing if it is a criminal or political murder.

I feel supported by my Board members who are present. Nolitha is our MC and she is perfect – warm, efficient and articulate. I know that there is a magnificent turnout of guests because they come to meet and hear from the Biehls. They are not attending because of

Mosaic. But at least Mosaic is exposed to all of them and we are grateful to be associated with the Biehls.

Now we have a lot of follow-up work to do.

Heartbreak

It is the 6th July 1997, three months after Peter and Michael's initial meeting in Washington. Today is an extremely important meeting for Mosaic. Tension is anticipated over the proposed discussion about the two million rand funding agreed to by USAID for CSPP's and Michael Jospe's project to train nurses for Mosaic.

I am anxious when I leave home. I keep saying to myself that we are the actual reason for them coming to Cape Town to meet with us. I need to relax and put Mosaic in God's hands. I have a very worried feeling all the way into town that I cannot shake off.

The Biehls and I greet each other with familiarity and affection. It is great to have them back and we are working on the same team. I introduce the Biehls to Marieta who thankfully accompanies me to this meeting. Marieta has skills that I do not have. She is more worldly-wise and can cope with bureaucracy. She has the expertise that I do not have in working with the 'Big Guns'.

The Biehls and the officials from USAID come from Pretoria to meet with Marieta and me. When Peter introduces us to them they introduce themselves, nod their heads and we shake hands. The men from Pretoria are a formidable group of business minded and high powered men working with USAID and the United States Embassy and they pay attention only to Peter. They neither appreciate nor acknowledge Marieta and me and this worries us. To them we are small fry. Marieta and I are not the right gender nor do we have enough strength to battle for the funding for the Nurses' project as it is initially proposed in Washington. I suspect that they will not listen to us about how the funding should be spent. I feel that respect for us is missing. We feel that we are losing our power and control. The worry that I felt in my car coming into town, is still with me.

We sit around a table in an alcove of the Hotel's Coffee Shop. The men from USAID take out piles of documents relating to the proposed Nurses' Project and place them on the table. During the meeting they will work out a Draft Agreement for the Nurses'

Project. The meeting is focused from the get-go. Peter and the USAID men project a powerful aura of authority around the table. Male Egos are poised and ready to manoeuvre into positions of control in this decision-making process while it is Mosaic that has brought us together to discuss the CSPP training of the nurses in mental health and psychiatry to work with our abused clients. Peter and the USAID men put their ideas forward strongly and start to manipulate the original Nurses' project. They only consult with each other as they discuss how to proceed. So much hinges on this meeting. There already appears to be a struggle for control between the parties.

I am missing Peter's support for us and Mosaic. Unfortunately Michael Jospe is not at this meeting and I desperately miss his presence. Michael is the man who brought this project to us and whom I respect for his integrity and who is waiting in the United States for news about our meeting. I know that if Michael were present to take care of us and support Mosaic, Peter would pay more attention to us and to the Nurses' project. But today Peter seems to be consumed in his own thoughts and oblivious of us.

The first matter that we discuss is 'who will be the primary grant recipient'. I am beginning to understand that the primary grant recipient is the party who is in charge of the project budget, the administrative forms and the detailed requirements. This party has to report to USAID and in turn, USAID will be in communication with the primary grant recipient. If Peter is the primary grant recipient then I doubt if USAID will let us into the negotiations for our project. The USAID officials are concerned that if Mosaic is the primary grant recipient, who will manage the complicated paperwork? We assure them that Marieta is highly qualified to do this and we give them some of her history.

Then they put forward another option. USAID officials feel that the Amy Biehl Foundation in the States should become the primary recipient of the project. Linda and Peter are not keen as they say that they will have to undergo strict investigation and there is a lot of paper work that they will have to complete in the States. Peter suggests that they set-up and register the Amy Biehl Foundation in South Africa to be the primary grant recipient and some of the money

allocated to the project can be used to set-up an office in Cape Town for the Amy Biehl Foundation office and Mosaic.

This suggestion sounds too clever for me and it sounds well prepared. It seems as if Peter is too well organised for the USAID negotiations and has rehearsed the options. This way they can use the USAID money to fund the establishment of another ABF in South Africa.

If we agree to Peter's suggestion the funding can be used for the nurses' project and can strengthen both our organisations. Strangely Peter seems to be quite comfortable with the amount of paper work that ABF South Africa as the recipient will be required to do if the Biehls become the primary grant recipients. USAID also tell us that if the allocation goes to Americans who are starting a project in another country then there is no tendering process necessary in that country. Funding can be allocated without having to go to tender. USAID sees this option of an ABF South Africa to be the answer.

Marieta and I are unsure about the decision. The grant is initially allocated to Mosaic and the CSPP initiative. It is not allocated to the Biehls. How will Michael Jospe feel about these changes when we report back to him? Marieta and I are seriously confused. Everything happens so quickly. I begin to feel very apprehensive and I do not trust Peter or these men to look after our interests.

The primary grant recipients of the money will now be the Biehls, not Mosaic.

The money will be used to establish an Amy Biehl Foundation in South Africa and Mosaic's office will also be established. Peter is happy and I am definitely not but there is nothing that we can do about it.

Peter plans to speak to Dullah Omar the Minister of Justice, who he knows well to ask him if he can recommend a lawyer to set up the Amy Biehl Foundation and help Mosaic as we do not have a lawyer. Marieta and I hope that it will eventually benefit Mosaic.

The next item for discussion is the training of the nurses in the United States. Although USAID in Pretoria believes that the training of black nurses is important, they do not support training nurses in the States. They want to see a South African component built into

the training because here we can train more women for less money and it will be locally orientated.

The Biehls are keen that the nurses are trained in the States because the exposure will encourage other funders to support the programme. We are also keen that they are trained in the States because this project was brought to us by CSPP and if nurses are trained here then there is no advantage for Michael's project and for the CSPP. In addition if they are to be trained in the States the research component with Mosaic and CSPP will take place.

When given the opportunity Marieta and I express our thoughts and our need for the nurses to be trained by CSPP in the States. The standard of training in the States will probably be superior to that available here. The USAID officials ignore what we are saying. They are focused on their own agenda and our input is not being taken seriously.

I sense that Michael and the CSPP are being ousted by USAID. USAID and Peter now hold the purse strings. The debate wages over where the nurses are to be trained. USAID inform us that they are concerned about the sustainability of Mosaic. They say that we have to look carefully at this issue. We are only two years old in service delivery and have very little financial backing. They seem to be bullying and threatening us. Why would they have allocated the funding to Mosaic and CSPP in the first place if we are regarded as a financially uncertain organisation?

I am tense and anxious and very baffled. The whole project is changing and I feel as if I am heading for a crash. In the beginning when Michael proposed his project to me it all seemed so exciting, so simple and effective. Now it seems that USAID and Peter are taking control of the project and determining how it is going to be implemented. The grant is disintegrating before our eyes. It is being split into pieces and it is not what we want.

At the close of the meeting USAID promises to give us the draft document with some guidelines. Hopefully they will have it ready within the week. We must now wait patiently for the draft agreement so that we can look at it and get their feedback. We wait to hear from USAID before taking anything further. I wonder what our

community workers will think about the decisions taken at the meeting.

We immediately give Michael feedback and tell him that we have to work this out before the Biehls leave Cape Town and return to the States. Peter will report to Michael on his return home. Michael seems worried and I tell him how distressed I am, but there is nothing more that we can do at this stage.

When we receive the draft back from USAID we see that Mosaic is tasked to manage the Nurses' project. The Biehls are tasked to oversee and monitor the project through the Amy Biehl Foundation (South Africa). I am happy that we shall manage the project and having the Biehls to oversee and monitor it, is great. As long as USAID elects Mosaic to manage or run the nurses' project then I shall feel somewhat secure.

I am not comfortable that Mosaic is not the primary grant recipient because I know Marieta can handle the administration and we can then be in control of what happens with the project. USAID then declare that Peter will become the primary grant recipient.

In 1997 two million rand is an enormous amount of money allocated to a project. Even if some of the funding is now allocated into setting up the ABF in South Africa, the funding can make a huge difference to Mosaic's services and working with our abused clients.

Marieta and I meet several times with Peter, Linda and the people from USAID to discuss the logistics of the project before they leave Cape Town. I hope Peter will make a fair partner. He appreciates the work that we are doing and is a friend of Mosaic since our inception, when we first meet him in 1995.

Two days later on the 8th July a reporter from the Los Angeles Times calls me and says that he is in Cape Town to cover the Amnesty hearings and wants to know about Mosaic. I answer his questions. He is interested to hear about our relationship with the Biehls and about Mosaic's work in the field. Before he leaves to interview Peter and Linda in town I tell him that I shall see him at the Amnesty Hearings. Our women, Teen and I shall attend the hearings to support the Biehls.

The hearings are emotional. During the Amnesty Hearings Peter and Linda show pictures of Amy and share some stories of her life.

The mothers of the accused sit behind us. It is awkward and sad for me to see these women whose sons have killed Amy. They take responsibility for what has happened. I know that the Biehls are happy to have me and our Mosaic women with them at the Hearing.

The four young men ask for Amnesty for killing Amy. They are submitted to questions and they give their answers. They say that they are sorry to have killed Amy but their slogan of 'One settler One bullet' and the rioting group of Pan African Congress (PAC) youth that they were involved with, empowered them to kill Amy as a White woman or a White Settler. We feel so sad for the Biehls to hear the stark details of Amy's death from the men who killed her. It is hard for them but they are resilient. At the end of the Hearing Peter and Linda are satisfied that the four young men will receive Amnesty for killing Amy. They forgive the men for what they did.

Everyone in South Africa is amazed that they can forgive their daughter's killers. Again there are many articles and pictures in the papers of the Biehls. The articles cover the Biehls forgiving and visiting the parents of the young men whom they have forgiven. The Biehls return home to the States.

I speak to Michael in California. Peter has spoken to him as well. We are both unhappy with the outcome of the meeting with USAID. Michael feels that he has lost control of his own project. I am so sad. For Michael and Mosaic it should not have happened as it did.

Betrayal

We receive a fax from Peter on the 2nd of August. Peter tells us that they are taking control of the direction of the project. I cannot believe what I am reading. What Peter says in this fax is completely contrary to what has been discussed and agreed upon when Marieta and I met with them and USAID one month ago. In the USAID draft agreement, written in black and white, Mosaic was tasked to manage the nurses' project and the Biehls were tasked to oversee and monitor the project.

Peter says he has spoken to Michael Jospe and has decided that CSPP in Los Angeles are going to assist with the needs assessment in Cape Town and do the planning and implementation of the project. I cannot get over this assumption that the assessment can be done long distance without Mosaic's permission. They are also appointing a young psychologist in Cape Town as their Project Manager. How dare they appoint him? I know this white man. He knows absolutely nothing about the black community, the needs of Mosaic or our clients. And how come Mosaic is not managing the project?

We do not understand why, when the Biehls return home, they change all that is agreed upon and previously arranged with USAID. I assume that his counterpart at USAID must have agreed with Peter's decisions to pursue their own agenda whilst safeguarding the Biehl's interests.

I feel that I am being plunged headfirst into a frightening, bottomless hell-hole of abuse. When I read his fax I am shocked and I cannot move. Then my blood pressure shoots up and I become enraged. I saw it coming on the first day when we met with USAID and the Biehls. How have they got this so terribly wrong? How can they do this? Marieta and I are distraught about what they have just done. What happens to the two million Rand from USAID? What happens to the friendship that they say they have with us and our Mosaic women? What happens to our relationship? Obviously I can no longer trust Peter and Peter does not trust me or Marieta. Gloria

Steinem must have gone through something similar when she wrote that 'the most hurtful thing is not what comes from our adversaries, it's what comes from our friends.'

I tell the Board about the new contract decided upon by Peter in the fax of the 2nd August. They are concerned. Fortunately the Biehls are returning to Cape Town. The Board wants to meet with them.

Meanwhile this week the Biehls send us a donation of \$500. I am somewhat amused by their patronising and mean contribution. I speak to my Board and we all decide that we have to return the money to them. Our Board and I feel that their donation is one more ploy to manipulate us. If we accept it then they can tell people when they are in Cape Town, that they still support Mosaic and that they sent us funding this week. We all question their integrity. They are not honest. We also refuse publicity that they say is for us. We now believe that any publicity that they get is only for themselves.

I call my Bank and ask them to return the money to the Biehls. When the Biehls receive the \$500 Linda calls me. She is very angry with me. She says they cannot believe that we can be so hostile towards them when all they want to do is help us. Linda keeps on saying that their daughter gave up her life for our country. Really? Not many people agree with this statement.

She does not believe the deterioration in the relationship comes from them or that they have done anything wrong. They cannot understand why Mosaic and I are being unreasonable when we are supposed to be such caring people. She blames Mosaic for the decisions that they have taken in the States and does not address our own concerns that we have with their 'new' contract. After three quarters of an hour of her one-sided scolding and me trying to answer her, I tell her that I cannot say anything more. I tell her that our Board wishes to meet with them when they are here. Then I cut her call.

I know that they are angry with us for returning their donation. If we accept the \$500 we shall be back at square one. They will completely forget that we are still aching from the ugly nurses' project. We are also smarting that they are excluding us from a project that belonged to Mosaic and for which they have appropriated the funding intended to support Mosaic.

It is terribly messy. Our world has fallen apart. In the Biehl's bid for power and control over the project and the USAID money, Mosaic has been cleverly side-lined and disempowered. I am slowly clearing space in my head and I can see that we need to end things now. It is so much more than 'sad'. I shall be very relieved and happy when the Board and the Biehl's meeting is over. In my heart of hearts I do not want to have anything to do with them again.

The Biehls arrive today. Frank the Chairperson of the Board of Mosaic's, lets them know that the Board wants to meet them on Sunday evening at my home. It should be a difficult meeting but it is absolutely necessary. We need to bring closure to what is happening between the Biehls and ourselves.

It is Sunday night and the Board members start arriving for the meeting. I am relieved and happy to have such a wonderfully supportive Board. They are open minded and objective and have always put things into correct perspective. They are professional people who are highly respected in the community and I believe that Peter and Linda also respect them. When the Biehls arrive I am cool and detached because of the hurt that I still feel towards them. I can hardly look at them. They go upstairs to my dining room where the Board members are sitting. Martine is also at the meeting taking minutes for us.

Peter again takes control and asks if he can speak first. He speaks for over half an hour without a stop. Once again he becomes involved in incessant name-dropping until I feel ill. Peter hardly gives anyone a chance to speak and makes all sorts of promises to Mosaic. Frank, has quite a time breaking into his monologue and keeping to our agenda. While he does this I watch our Board Members' faces. I can see that they are also totally unimpressed and shocked by Peter Biehl.

Martine asks them a pertinent question. Then Linda lets slip with this bit of important information. She says that the Mosaic component of the nurses' training programme will become the sole property of USAID. This means that USAID can use Mosaic's material anywhere and with whomever they please and we have no control over it. The Biehls have never disclosed this information to us before now. I wonder why not?

It is outrageous. Why did they keep it a secret? We shall not accept anyone using our own materials without our taking credit for them. When Frank gives me the chance to speak I say directly “We have repeatedly knocked at your door and asked to be let in, but you have kept us out in the dark”.

Then they both rise like wild cats and Linda exasperatedly says “Then I do not know why we are talking. And I do not know what we are doing here!”

Peter flushes bright red in his face. They are both furious with me for exposing them in front of our Board members.

I explain that when I repeatedly phone my supposed contact person at USAID in Pretoria, I have to leave messages because she never returns my calls. When I ask USAID for a copy of the budget they will not send it to us because they refuse to give us information without Peter’s consent. Peter does not give his consent even though we have asked him several times for a copy of the budget. They have still not told us how the grant funding is going to be spent.

During the meeting Hannah Reeve, one of our strong and vocal members asks to see the budget. Peter is very reluctant to take it out. She keeps on asking for it. When he finally dislodges it from his briefcase Martine reaches across the table and grabs it. She takes it downstairs to photocopy. Peter’s face flushes blood-shot red. We can see that he is very uncomfortable. Now it will tell us how the money will be spent. When Martine returns the budget to the Board they see that unbelievably there is no line item on the USAID budget for Mosaic. How can the Biehls do this when the project was originally funded for Mosaic and Mosaic’s offices were to be established along with ABF offices? The Board and I cannot believe what we see.

There is no money in the USAID budget allocated to Mosaic.

Absolutely Nothing.

The Biehls have budgeted R660,000 just for their own consultation. This will cover their trips to South Africa to set up the ABF offices and oversee their own activities. This budget is obviously drawn up by Peter and his counterpart at USAID in Pretoria. How can the Biehls spend a third of the money from USAID’s funding on themselves?

I ask myself “How would USAID in Washington react to this budget”? I also sense that they obviously do not know how Peter and USAID in Pretoria have drawn it up. The funding is now being spent on the Biehls and items that USAID in Washington did not intend it to be spent on. We now believe that they are telling us “This is the way it is. Take it or leave it”. We feel disrespected and disregarded. We feel absolutely betrayed. I see that we have been taken hostage by them and we are under the Biehls’ and USAID Pretoria’s abusive power and control. Things have developed from bad decisions made at the July meeting to the ultimate worst and irretrievable decisions that they have decided upon in the States.

What really upsets me is the fact that they have fundraised several times in the States using Mosaic’s name as the beneficiary. Helen tells me of a fundraising event in Santa Fe where chefs and artists provided their work free of charge. We believe that the art works were then raffled. The Biehls never told Mosaic about the fundraising event and we have not received any money from the Biehls from that event.

Journal August 1997

“The meeting this evening was awful. Horrible. Disgusting. Abusive. The Biehls behaved just as they have done since the funding was allocated to the nurses’ project. Secretive and over-bearing. The Board and I were upset with their arrogant behaviour during the meeting.

Tonight at the meeting they felt that Peter and Linda were cautious and calculating – their words. Their comments made me realise that I wasn’t exaggerating or imagining the Biehl’s attitude. I felt justified and validated. I am grateful that Mosaic has such a strong and supportive Board of Directors. This meeting gave them the opportunity to assess Peter and Linda’s standpoint for themselves. They could experience them first hand and draw their own conclusions. It was a severe indictment on the Biehls that they see them as cautious and calculating. Our Board Members are open minded and objective and have always helped me to put things into perspective.

After we finished the meeting and the Biehls had left, Sheryl said, “Rolene you have pissed them off. Believe me if they didn’t need Mosaic they’d never speak to you again.” She is right. I keep thanking God for these wonderful caring people who support me and Mosaic. Without them I would be lost”.

The great sadness for us is that whereas we thought that Peter and Linda were our friends, we have come to realise that they have been working against us and undermining us. Judging from Peter's latest communication with us, very little of this funding, if any, is going to the grassroots level. If Mosaic is excluded from the budget where are they going to find another grassroots organisation that they can support that helps abused women in disadvantaged communities.

During the meeting with the Biehls they ask us if they can meet with our Mosaic community workers. I agree to arrange it for them. The community workers need to meet the Biehls probably for the last time and they come to my home the following Wednesday in the late afternoon. I ask them to come earlier to discuss the questions that they want to ask the Biehls. I give them a short summary of our Board meeting last Sunday. I want them to decide for themselves if we are going to still go ahead with the nurses' project or walk away from the Biehls.

Before the Biehls arrive I leave them and I take a walk along the beachfront. I sit on a bench looking at the sea and think about their meeting. Now they are in charge and I do not want to be involved in their decisions. After an hour and a half I return home. I start to make cheese rolls for the women to eat in the taxi going home. Their meeting comes to an end. Peter gets up from the table and greets me. I also greet him but he can see that I am not comfortable with him. Once I have returned home the women also do not look very comfortable. They can see that I am upset and they worry about me.

On Friday in our classroom I have supervision with our community workers. We spend a long time discussing their meeting with the Biehls on Wednesday. They speak about their questions to the Biehls that needed to be clarified and the unsatisfactory answers that they receive from them. They speak about the vehicle that the Biehls said that they will buy for Mosaic. I tell them that at the Board Meeting the Biehls said that they cannot buy a vehicle. They are not surprised. They speak about their gut feelings and their understanding of the implications if we get involved in any way. I am impressed with their insight and understanding. I asked them whether they trust the Biehls as this is the most crucial issue for

involvement. We look at several inconsistencies in the Biehl's statements and promises to the Board and to them.

Alice says "They have used our name to get funding for the nurses' project and now they are sweeping us off the table. We feel used and abused". We all agree with her.

After our discussion we know that we have to make our decision. Does our answer lie in how it feels for us to be *with* the Biehls and how it feels to be *without* them? We then enter into a prayer session where almost everyone prays quietly. Then I immerse them into the situations either 'for' or 'against' our involvement. They must not think but they have to experience their own feelings in that deep state of relaxation.

When we are finished, I ask each one if they have come to a decision and they all say yes. I then ask them to please lift up one finger if their answer is to walk away from the Biehls and the nurses' project. Every single one of them puts up one finger. We have our answer. Everyone feels sad and disillusioned. Our hopes of the funding to set up Mosaic's offices and our hopes of training nurses to help our clients have been dashed. And our working with, and trust in the Biehls has been destroyed.

Before the Biehls set off for the States, Frank meets with them. They speak to Frank and promise Mosaic certain rights. Frank and I shall consult and then we shall take the information to the next Board meeting on Tuesday night. Sheryl is behind the community workers' decision to leave the Biehls and says that we should try and find funding from other sources to pay Marieta's salary.

But when all is said and done I have made my promise and I shall not back down. It is the end of what I truly felt was a beautiful friendship and partnership. The whole Biehl Saga lasts for six weeks from when we received their fax on the 2nd August until they returned to Cape Town at the end of August and then left for the States in September. We end our dealings with them on the 28th September 1997. It is truly shattering in so many ways.

Journal September 1997

"From the way that the Biehls have behaved since the Board meeting I think that they may have regretted their behaviour. They call me and have been overly

friendly on the phone. But I have been casually offhand with them. In fact it is difficult for me to listen to their voices. They are not being honest. I can accept most things but I cannot be lied to. People who lie and are dishonest, kill me deep inside. They wound my soul and they destroy my respect and trust for them. I have no time for people who lie.

I ask myself over and over why the Biehls have behaved towards Mosaic as they have done. I think that their material greed has overtaken their spirits and souls. I ask myself how can they live with themselves comfortably after cutting Mosaic out of the project, the project that they got their money for. They have truly let us down. And now we walk away."

Once the Biehls leave Cape Town the faxes fly fast and furious between us. It is a desperate plea for clarity on our behalf and the giving of misinformation and secrecy on theirs. When I speak to Peter just before they return to Cape Town once again he says that he has been very busy. He thinks it will be better to sit around a table and talk. He also says that during our meeting he meant no slight to the Board.

However, I ask Peter why we did not get funding from one of their fundraising events. He tells me how expensive it is to keep Amy's flat mate's daughter from Cape Town at Stanford University in the States. They are sponsoring her through the ABF. This news is outrageous and I am deeply hurt. Also on the telephone when I ask Peter where the other funding is going to be spent he says "You just do not understand". Then he cuts me off at this point. He will not discuss it. This whole conflict situation really opens our eyes and brings out major hidden agendas. We see more clearly now how they have used the name of Mosaic to raise funds for other causes and have not passed the proceeds onto Mosaic.

Despite this disclosure we know that Peter has plenty of time to fax Helen at Ikamva Labantu telling her about the \$10,000 which they have managed to raise in one week on their return home. They want this money to be spent on a golf driving range in Khayelitsha. Peter wants Helen to try and get land donated for the project.

Helen tells me this news and says that she has referred them to the Khayelitsha Forum as she does not want to be associated with this project. Alice, in a letter written by our women to the Biehls,

mentions her disappointment that ABF has raised the \$10,000 for a golf ground (as she puts it) and not for Mosaic knowing how poor we are. Linda's most indignant reply is that this is a violence prevention project and that in the States there is a saying that 'Families that Play Together, Stay Together'. When we read this in class we all burst out laughing and Hilda says "Can you imagine a Xhosa woman holding a golf stick and playing golf?"

We also visualise an unsuspecting Mrs Mtshazi sitting minding her own business in Khayelitsha and having a golf ball drop through her shack's Hot Tin roof. It is hilarious. It provides us with much laughter. We have been associated with the Biehls for two years and they have had many funding events during which we received only \$6,000 from ABF. Yet for a completely inappropriate project for a deprived community, it only takes them one week to find \$10,000. How totally disgraceful.

Journal September 1997

"I am slowly returning to some sort of stability, clarity and peace of mind after this torturously confusing, angrily frustrating, frightening, physically and emotionally draining Saga. Every fibre of my being has struggled and fought against what has been happening to Mosaic.

We have learnt much in the process. It has been painfully difficult as truths have been uncovered. Peter in particular is puffed up with his own importance. He has this big presence that refuses any questioning of his position. He gives out strong messages of his right to the funding and to their control of the project. He has bagged the money. He believes that he has every right to do this.

Once again, this puts us into a very difficult financial position. It has taken much time and effort on our behalf and there has been no time to look for other funding. Peter makes me feel like a Begging Fool. He has no respect for me or empathy for the situation that he has manoeuvred Mosaic into.

How relieved I am that it all seems to be coming to a close at last. I am also grateful for the strength of my Faith and my ability to ask God to help me in this major testing ground in Mosaic's Herstory!

And how tired tired tired I am at present. Now that I have come through the mill, I am grateful that, instead of it taking me years to come through this with clear understanding and answers it has only taken me seven weeks this time around. I am impressed and I must be learning my lessons!"

I cannot wait for Marieta to return from vacation in November. It has been hard for me to shoulder the responsibility on my own again. Much has changed since she has been away. The financial situation for Mosaic is really critical.

Teen was also ill so things got stuck and my level of anxiety rose considerably. Whenever finances hit rock bottom I think that I can always give Mosaic another loan. The only problem is that I do not get paid to train, my loans never get repaid and my bank balance is dropping. I know that it is a safety net for me.

Marieta arrives back from her vacation at the end of this month and we shall have to work in a desperate effort to get funding. Marieta has been away for five weeks and only accepted our offer to join Mosaic if she could take this leave time. At some point in November we shall once again be bankrupt.

I unconsciously stop by the fax several times this past week. It is a habit to see if there is anything from the Biehls. It brings back memories of the joy and excitement I used to feel when I saw a fax from them.

Our community workers completely break relations with the Biehls. Michael Jospe and CSPP also break relations with the Biehls because of the way in which they have been treated. It is not only Mosaic who has borne the brunt of their high handedness.

Journal October 1997

"On Thursday night I spoke to Suzi, my amazing psychic friend and she said to me "Rolene trust your instincts. I never trusted these people from the moment I saw them on TV when Amy was killed. They are using their daughter for their own gain. You were living with the illusion because you wanted to."

I told her that I believe that this project and Mosaic's withdrawal has been brought to them as much as to us. They also had big lessons to learn from this. In the office during the week Lucy our friend says "The irony of all this is that they should be wooing you instead of cutting you out of the process. They need you."

I believe they will possibly realise what they have lost now we are out. Or perhaps we are not that important in their scheme of things after all. We have served our purpose.

I was angry the other day when I heard that the Biehls are helping another organisation with the money that they got for Mosaic. I was surprised at the extent

of my anger. I also heard from a friend that listeners on Cape Talk Radio are commenting on the amnesty hearings and on the Biebls. I am not the only one to feel that they have used Amy's murder to meet their own needs and people are suspicious of their motives."

But it is such a hardship for me to keep us financially afloat and still forgive them for what they have done to us. I keep on thinking that I am 'over' them and then they pop up again into my life and I realise that I am definitely not 'over' their betrayal of Mosaic. On one hand I know that if we received the USAID money so easily, we would never have learnt our lessons or grown so strong. But looking at the broader picture, although we have lost out on funding and so-called friends, it will not stop us from helping abused women. With everything that has happened with the Biebls I sometimes forget that we are still employing our remarkable community workers who heal and support our abused women clients. It is the appreciation from our women clients that keeps us all working successfully.

Apart from the Biehl Saga, this year includes a magnificent and joyful event for all of us at Mosaic. Sixteen of our second group of well-trained women celebrate their Graduation Ceremony in June of 1997. We hold it at the University of the Western Cape once more. It is a wonderfully happy ceremony filled with dancing and singing. Friends and family attend the event and at last our second group are thrilled to be Mosaic community workers. After the ceremony we take pictures of all the graduates who are beautifully dressed and smiling widely. My son Trevor designs and prints their Graduation Certificates which they appreciate and value. They are proud and happy to receive them and some of the women tell me that they will frame them and place them up on their walls at home. There are capable women in this group who work competently in our different communities and who have helped many of our abused clients. I am proud of them.

Journal November 1997

"Marieta and I have worked well together and she doesn't take advantage of me which I really appreciate and feel good about. Although she is my Assistant Director and I often need her in the office to consult with me or to use as a sounding

board for new ideas, when she asks to go early or have time off to fetch her daughter I am happy to give her this time.

It is such a relief that she will initiate work and come up with proposals and budgets for funding, proposals that she initiates herself and that I do not have to do on my own anymore. In fact, from our combined and focused efforts on funding we have got so much on the go at the moment that she said to me last Friday that she doesn't want to go on her Xmas vacation because there is so much work to be done.

I hope that we can find a venue for Mosaic this coming year so that we can move into a neutral space. Then when I am 'off duty' or take a few days off, I am really 'off duty' and I have my private space. Now when I take a few days off I am still living in my office.

Next year I am going to have to buy some new clothes for my visits to potential funders. For the past two years my nose has been on the ground and in the townships. But now I have to look a little more professional. My staff say that my jeans and T-shirts are great for the community but not good for my professional image."

The financial situation for Mosaic is critical. Marieta arrives back from her vacation at the end of this month and we shall have to work in a desperate effort to get funding into Mosaic. At some point in November we shall once again be bankrupt.

We are busy writing proposals to Sanlam, NIZA in Amsterdam and the Department of Social Services (later called the Department of Social Development) about subsidies for the community workers. The Community Chest proposal is submitted again. Marieta and Martine work so hard on this one. We are hoping that Community Chest and the Department of Social Services will give us grants next year. If they do, it will see us through to the end of 1998. At the moment we are financially broke again but I know that 1998 is our year and I hope that this will be the last time that we ever experience rock bottom again.



Marieta and Martine in the office at my home

And so, Mosaic ends 1997. We are all grateful for the gifts and blessings that have recently come to us. It is the end of a full year which has brought us huge challenges and taught us many extraordinary lessons. Alas it is the end of the heart-wrenching and heart-breaking Biehl Saga for Michael and for Mosaic. I still keep in touch with Michael and we lick our wounds together.

It is now December. Martine and Marieta and our staff go on vacation. The staff are all visiting their homes out of Cape Town for their Xmas holidays. The office is quiet and work has temporarily halted until next year. It is nice to have my own private space again. I can breathe deeply once more, walk on the beachfront and visit friends and family. I can live a normal life and sit and read books that I do not have the opportunity to do when I am working. This break comes at the right time. Thank you God.

Fear and Fury

It is the 17th of January 1998 and I give several 'happy rands' at Rotary this morning because I am happy to kick 1997 in the butt. I am happy to say hello to this brand new year. I would not exchange one second of the challenges and lessons that we learnt last year but I never want to repeat a year like 1997 again.

Last week I spend three days phoning companies to tell them about Mosaic and ask them for funding. Most requests are rejected but we get a few small donations and a trainee sponsorship from de Beers Marine. We have two fundraising functions in the pipeline, a concert and an event at Bellingham.

This week we receive the proceeds of the concert that was held a week ago. This is gratefully received. As a result of these concerts we receive press and radio publicity that is great. In addition, Cape Talk Radio calls this week to tell me that they are adopting Mosaic as their community project this year to promote and support. After researching the market and visiting other NGOs for four months they decide that Mosaic is the most worthy NGO to support. We shall meet next month to discuss our needs and ways in which they will get involved.

Funding is like the jewel in our crown. I am elevated to heights of excitement and ecstasy when I think of receiving funding. It is exciting to know that what we are doing is appreciated by our funders. I have two more fundraisers lined up soon, one in February and one mid-March. I am getting more and more involved with these fundraising events now and life is really a merry-go-round.

Some of our community workers prepare for Mosaic's factory workshops in Saldanha Bay next week. We are moving out of Cape Town and four community workers will be training about abuse in this small fishing village. The fisheries are paying us for the training and 120 of their workers will participate. It is exciting.

I have 24 community workers who are trained by me and employed by Mosaic. They are working in the community and

attracting and supporting many abused women who need help. Despite all of our efforts, big funding is not coming into Mosaic to sustain us. Once again we are a few months away from bankruptcy. I feel that all of us are walking a tightrope.

My community workers and I discuss our funding crisis and we say that we cannot go on like this. Eventually the community workers and I make a decision to break the news to the second group who they brought to Mosaic. Most of the second group are going to have to leave Mosaic. For all of us it is traumatic.

There are some wonderful women in the second group and they share the workload with the community workers. I know they will be devastated when they hear me tell them they have to leave Mosaic but we just do not have enough funding to support them.

Perhaps one of the most important lessons that we are learning experientially is the lesson of 'who we truly are, with or without Mosaic'. We have to learn how to carry ourselves forward with dignity and pride learning all the time, no matter where it is or with whom we work. The 'break' with the second group will be agony.

Journal March 1998

"It is the 8th of March today. At the beginning of this year I was so hopeful that we'll get funding. But tonight I have reached the place that I was at in Clifton when I decided to give up Mosaic. I simply cannot do this anymore. I am always just in pain these days. We are almost bankrupt again. The highs and lows are too difficult for me to carry.

I Have To Work Out How To Do This. I Can't Go On Any Longer. I Just Don't Understand What Is Going On And Why There Is No Money For Mosaic.

On Thursday I told the second group that we only have two months funding left and that they will probably have to leave Mosaic in May. It was the most difficult, emotional day I have experienced. I watched them trying to control their tears trying to hold back their emotions. I watched them throw their heads back and then just cry.

We are all grieving at the injustice of this all, at the breaking of the bonds between us, not seeing each other each day, giving up a way of life because Mosaic is a way of life. We all cried together at not being able to look forward to sharing problems with each other and having to stop their services to Mosaic's clients.

And this is all because of a lack of funding. We are hopelessly poor. But this is God's organisation so where is God? And where is the money God to keep on doing our important work for women who are abused? I don't want to even acknowledge that there is a God or Angels tonight. I am fed up. Even if they are here tonight I don't want to know or hear from them. I just don't understand what is happening. They can have Mosaic. They can give it to someone else. You don't play fair God. I am out. So there.

I am tired of believing, waiting and praying. Funder's indifference, excuses, postponements are wearing me down. Maybe Mosaic is meant to fold. I have cried my heart out tonight and I want to cry it out all over again. My head, my eyes and my throat are so sore. I feel like a child who wants to hit back and scream that it is unfair!

I was upset with a business colleague of Lawrence's who runs a mega big organisation and who gave me no support when I asked if he could fund Mosaic in some way. He told me that "If there is no money then Mosaic will have to close". I was shocked and angry with him. His company supports other organisations but not Mosaic. I see him around at social functions but I do not have any respect for him anymore. I told him as I have told many others that there are three things that will happen. "Mosaic has to continue with services, the community workers have to be paid and we shall have to find the money some way or another".

Today I told a colleague in the field that we were bankrupt and she said in a sarcastic way "Well you seem to be doing a lot of things without money". People still think that the Biebls are supporting us. It is too much. There are too many proposals that take the stuffing out of me. We are rejected and my nerves and hopes are dashed. My nerves can't take this anymore. I am just bogged down with worries, battling on and drowning. Giving, giving, giving without receiving anything in return.

Tonight I realise that this may not be able to happen any longer and that if Mosaic folds, I need to comfort myself with the knowledge that the women will continue with the work, with or without Mosaic. They have the skills and the knowledge to take it out into the community. I shall have to help them find good jobs and they are so well trained that they will be snapped up in the workplace anyway.

Today at a workshop I learnt that the Department of Social Services has no money for Mosaic but there may be money from the Shelter fund. I must meet with them and see if there is a way of getting some of this funding. Funders reject

us all the time. Everything hangs in the balance. I have a small amount of money to pay the women until they find jobs.

So Big Deal. Where the hell did I get this Effing notion of a spider web centre with everyone endorsing the project anyway? Dangerous Effing nonsense in my head. I am sick. Sick. Tonight I give up hope. More than hope, I give up purpose. I feel the full weight of responsibility for getting money for 24 people's lives. Their dedication and commitment to Mosaic is sterling. Tonight I give up the promises that I made to my precious circle of black friends, my soul sisters. They have invested their 'all' in their work with their clients, in Mosaic, in me and in each other. They have trusted and believed in me and now I shall have to give this all up. I have let them down. Everything is dashed to smithereens. I have no more energy left nor do I have the will to carry the burden anymore. I can't force myself to do another thing. I can only cry. I can only feel such sorrow for us all. They are pure gold. I can only feel their passion and thank them for staying with me for all this time and this sets me off crying again."

It is now the 22nd of March 1998 and this is certainly a period of great turmoil and chaos for me. Not only is Mosaic hanging in the balance but I feel as if all of me is just hanging in the balance as well. Everything seems to be disintegrating. I am pushing myself and I have a constant headache. I am not pleasant to be with. When I try to tell people what I am going through they look at me and do not understand. Or they look away or become critical and say that they know Mosaic is too big to continue. I feel that I am doing Mosaic harm by being so emotional, being the victim and turning people away instead of getting through to them about how important our work is. I am a good trainer and supervisor but I doubt myself as a director.

On Saturday I felt such deep pain at an Associate's fundraiser when he chose other beneficiaries for the proceeds of the event and not Mosaic. He knows that Mosaic is in serious trouble. When I initially asked if we could be supported he told me that they were only supporting children's projects. However when I got there I saw that he gave part of the proceeds to another organisation that supports women. He did not expect me to be at the fundraiser and when he saw me he looked uncomfortable. I felt dreadful the whole night. I just wanted to come home.

I am in such a strange mood. I feel incompetent. Ineffectual. I do not have the strength to carry on. I snap at Martine and I am dismissive of my mother. I am irritated with people and with myself. I do not like who I am. I find myself being critical and dictatorial. I recognise my thoughts as total fatigue and exhaustion. I guess that I am thoroughly burnt out.

Despite the fear of losing the second group of community workers, I decide to visit Mbekweni near Paarl where Josephine runs the Mosaic Youth Support Group. I want to see how the youth are faring and if we can try to get funding for them. Whenever I visit the youth I come away with a feeling of pleasure. These children are abused but they are brave and honest in their role-plays. I fear losing them and desperately do not want to stop the youth group from continuing.

This morning besides the pain, the anger and the feelings of injustice, I become conscious again of the awful shock of Fear. The fear of bankruptcy, fear of losing our youth and the second group of women and fear of losing Mosaic.

When I wake up with the familiar dreaded feeling coursing through my veins I realise that although we speak about anger, loss and pain in our classroom, we do not talk about the most disturbing emotion of all, the Fear that we are all experiencing. Above all else this fear has to be faced and if I face this with them we shall be able to move on. When I examine all the aspects of fear that we are going to have to deal with, I begin to reach the core emotion that has to be addressed.

I love my books. I have grown and learnt so much through reading books. They are my gurus and I can never be without a book next to my bed. I cherish and treat my books as precious friends. I am reading the third volume of Neale Donald Walsh's *Conversations with God*. I am really enjoying the content and it is inspiring me to carry on through the hard times in Mosaic whilst being in touch with God and drawing firmly on my faith. The *Conversation* books confirm many of my understandings about this life and life after life, and the books discuss so much of my philosophy and also teach me so much more. I love having all of my beliefs augmented and confirmed. It is

intense reading and I have to concentrate hard. I live in my emotions all the while that I am immersed in the pages.

The only time that I have available to read is in bed before I put out my lights. Most nights I am so exhausted that I fall asleep with the book open on my chest. The readings give me much to think about and to relate to regarding my life and my journey, and especially in terms of Mosaic which I am clearly having a totally symbiotic relationship with. Mosaic consumes me and I am consumed by Mosaic.

Mosaic is God's place. Tonight I have a traumatic experience. As I am reading the book my thoughts turn from God and switch to thoughts of Mosaic. I think how incredibly hard it is to cope. We have prayed consistently for funding and for the feeling of being held, not for ourselves but ultimately for the abused women who we serve. And where is God in all of this?

I take *Conversations with God* and angrily hurl it across the room where it crashes onto the cupboard door and falls to the floor. I get out of bed and rush to grab the book which is lying open on the floor. And with full force I grab it and I hurl it across the room with all the fury I can muster. Then I sprint to the other side of my bedroom and shouting at God I scoop up the book and without caring what I am doing I throw it violently again. I am crying out loud to God to Eff off and leave me. I begin to stamp vigorously on the book. I have never done this before and a silent plea is resonating in my head to stop it. I am destroying God and *Conversations with God*.

Over and over I take it, throw it and angrily retrieve it. Until I eventually fall on my knees at the foot of my bed. I howl and weep into the duvet. All my tears pour forth without control. I have lost my faith in my God.

I eventually retrieve the battered book which lies on the floor. I put the book on the side of the bed with my other books. And I fall into an exhausted sleep. Each time I surface from my disrupted sleep I remember how angry I am with God. I start to cry and the tears run down my cheeks. In the darkness I think that I am living in cuckoo land. Up in the clouds in an Effing Fog of Faith. I have been played with like a trusting fool who has so much love and faith in God. A dangerous fool who has taken other trusting, faithful, committed

fools into the deep dark pit with me. The cold reality is that we live in this material world and so we have to have material things to keep us going. Without this we are lost and so is our second group. If Mosaic is your organisation God then You have walked out on us. I do not even have the energy or desire to discover what we have to learn from all of this.

But the days continue. I put on a brave face. The staff do not know what I am going through. My anger with God cannot stop the second group's training.

It is Thursday and Zintatu comes into class and she is in a bad state. She shares how she was gang raped on Tuesday night. Her voice is low and she tells us that she got into what she thought was a taxi and three young men raped her and discussed killing her. She fought back and they threw her out of the 'taxi' into a dangerous area. Fortunately someone from the squatter camp eventually led her back to the highway and then she managed to get to town. She went to the police station to lay a charge. The police took her back to the YMCA in Athlone where she now stays. This ordeal lasted from 8pm to 4am.

What a horrific experience. As she shares with us she begins to cry out loudly and we are all in tears. The group says that they have counselled their clients who have been raped but they feel completely different now that it has happened to Zintatu. Everyone is so distressed and angry that Lungiswa says that she hates herself for bringing males into this world. We do healing work on Zintatu but she is still deeply distressed. It is difficult to move the energy in class.

Zintatu comes back into class today, Monday. She tell us that her blood sugar and blood pressure are up because of the stress and fear associated with the rape. She says she cannot heal herself. This is a long matter and it will take forever to heal. She leaves class early as she needs to go to hospital to have her blood pressure checked.

There is a whole further upheaval around Zintatu for me to deal with this week. It starts on Monday after Zintatu leaves supervision early. Alice says that she thinks we really should do something about Zintatu's drinking problem. I am shocked to the core as I have absolutely no idea at all that she has a drinking problem. This is absolutely forbidden in Mosaic for obvious reasons. It is of grave concern to me. Because of the strict labour laws in the country it is

not so easy to dismiss anyone in the work force without adhering to the correct procedure. Although she has had verbal and written notices because last year she took unauthorised leave, we did not know about her drinking problem.

I ask who knows about Zintatu's drinking. The women in the group do not tell me for various reasons. They become cagey with me and I become furious. I tell them that they are bound by their contracts. They have to reveal anything that could jeopardise Mosaic. Our reputation, our community respect and credibility that we have meticulously been working so hard to maintain, cannot be destroyed by one of our group. I am angry and say that through their secrecy Mosaic and their jobs can all go down the tube. They can see how angry I am. Then when I threaten to walk out of the class and not return, they share and apologise and say that they realise how damaging this is to all of us in Mosaic.

At home in the office when I tell Marieta about Zintatu's drinking she says that she smelt alcohol on her breath when she came to get her transport money. Why did she not discuss this with me? At least I would know about it and I could have spoken to Zintatu about it. Zintatu has to leave Mosaic but I am not sure how we can do this.

We receive advice from labour lawyers and colleagues in other organisations. We can do nothing about it unless we address it as it happens. Another trauma in Mosaic? The lack of funding is not traumatic enough?

We learn many lessons from this. We learn about the rule of transparency with and between the staff and me. We learn the major lesson that we have to get our rules and regulations into place as soon as possible. We have neglected to do this in favour of other things that we feel are more important. Now we have to establish official procedures for the future.

Soon after hearing about Zintatu's drinking problem I meet her outside a shopping mall. She asks me if she can go home to the Eastern Cape. I refuse to allow this and especially because I now know that she drinks. She tells me that if she cannot go home then she resigns from Mosaic. I ask her to come into class and sign a form to say that she resigns. She does this and we all say goodbye to her.

We have fond memories of Zintatu and we feel sorry for her but she is not Mosaic material. It is a relief for me. It is a clean break.

My friend Sally is a horticulturist and she wants to work with Mosaic. We discuss how she can do this and decide that she can teach two of our women how to grow vegetables through the Permaculture project. Permaculture is new in South Africa and comes from Australia. It would be wonderful if we can teach many of our destitute clients how to grow their own food by reducing, reusing and recycling their waste.

In class I share this with our community workers. Two of our second group want to work with Sally and she is delighted. Zoleka and Nomvuzo already grow food in their shack's gardens and they are also delighted. Our Mosaic Drum Garden Permaculture Project is born and Zoleka and Nomvuzo begin a three month set-up training period with Sally and then nine months of supervision by working in their client's gardens. They are taught about plant cultivation, basic plant physiology, compost making, crop selection and rotation, pest control with natural herbs and flowers and methods of storing and economically cooking their vegetables.

Sally also teaches them how to use the computer. They learn about administrative skills and preparation of training sessions. They are enthusiastic about starting to work in the community. Our community workers are impressed and a little envious about their computer training - they also want to learn about computers.

From our poorest clients, eighteen are chosen for the project. We give them transportable Mosaic drums to grow their vegetables in and we select carrots and spinach as they are the quickest and easiest to grow. They receive monthly training in the studies Sally taught Zoleka and Nomvuzo.

The clients receive weekly visits and they start to feed themselves and their families. They learn how to dig holes the size of a door and fill them with plant and kitchen waste, paper and cardboard before planting their seeds. They learn how to prick holes into soda bottles lids and when filled they squeeze them and water their gardens. I am fascinated by what they have learnt and grateful to Sally. She is also delighted.

Our clients' neighbours come to their gardens when our community workers are training them. In this way the neighbours' skills are also developed and they are happy. When they have their gardens established they sell their vegetables to other neighbours and propagate seeds for sale.

During the time that we are involved in the Mosaic Drum Garden Permaculture project Nomvuzo and Zoleka attend a ten day permaculture course, plus they visit other community vegetable projects. Representatives from other organisations visit our project. And when clients move their shacks they take their transportable drums full of vegetables with them.



Nomvuzo in her client's garden

We look at the benefits that Mosaic gains from it. Our name is mentioned in the community and people know about us more often. Our community workers keep on suggesting more clients to the project. They tell us how much it is appreciated by the women who participate. They say that it gives us measurable and exciting results. Our poor and abused women who work in their gardens receive greater self-esteem and can uplift the quality of their lives for themselves and their families. Everyone agrees that it is a most successful venture.

We have a session in Gugulethu where the recipients of the Mosaic Drum Garden Permaculture Project attend. They talk to us about the enormous value of the project to them and their families. It is emotional and uplifting. At this meeting we say that the project will continue next year with more disadvantaged clients to learn about Permaculture.

We are all delighted when we hear that the project is one of ten projects that are shortlisted for Nestle's Nutrition Award. One hundred and forty organisations applied and we are thrilled to be shortlisted. And of course we are most grateful for the funding that we receive for this project.

Revelations

Today my young friend Luisa rings the doorbell and she bounds up the stairs with two bunches of flowers and the Caroline Myss tapes on *'Spiritual Madness'*. We hug warmly. She tells me that she knows that I am going through hell and she hopes that the flowers and tapes will cheer me up. I am overcome by Luisa's thoughtfulness. I ask her if I can give her one bunch of flowers so that she can think of me when she looks at them and I shall do the same. Her kindness touches me deeply.

However, the more I think about the group, the more I have to be totally honest with myself. Some of them are not suitable for the job. If I had interviewed this second group as I had done with the first, I would not have accepted some of them.

I am afraid that if they leave Mosaic they will blame Mosaic and speak badly of us in the community. I do not know how I am going to distinguish who stays and who goes. I know it is not possible to keep them with us. I have never terminated trainees before and the thought of taking responsibility for this is devastating.

I take a break from the office downstairs and go upstairs. I stand in the kitchen making coffee and a snack for lunch. I then stare out of the window at the sea and wonder why all this is happening to Mosaic.

Deep in thought, I absent-mindedly look down at the vase of Luisa's flowers in front of me. I see that they are still as fresh and as beautiful as when she brought them six weeks ago. I am amazed. Looking carefully now, I am aware of a numinous aura and a heightened energy surrounding the vase. Not only are the flowers still fresh and beautiful but the water is as sparkling clean and clear as when I first put them into the vase. What is even more surprising is that on one of the stalks submerged in the sparkling water I see a new little offshoot sprouting tiny spring-green leaves.

I am confused and I look up and suddenly blurt out loudly 'OK, what's going on here?' Quicker than a flash of lightning my mind is

impressed with a powerful answer. 'You are not listening!' And I know exactly what that means. This miracle is happening in front of me to stop me in my tracks. I am not listening to all the signs pointing to the retrenchment of our second group of community workers and my refusal to let them go. It seems that only a miracle like this can get the message through to me. Like it or not, avoid it or not, ache and fear for the exit of dear and well-trained staff or not, courage or not, it seems that I have no choice. I shall have to go through with their retrenchment or deal with more consequences of the Almighty kind.

I know that I have not listened. Although I could have largely avoided this emotional confrontation and done it an easier way I have chosen not to. I know that I am stubborn and implacable. I have forgotten that if I do not listen to my inner voice and act on the knowing then 'Heaven will connive and kick me in the Butt.' In an important way the flowers are also confirming the loving support from a steadfast Universe.

Another message immediately flashes through. 'Mosaic never was, never is and never will be yours.' Okay. I may think that Mosaic is Me and that I am Mosaic but that is a delusion. I am Me, with or without Mosaic. But I cannot 'become' Mosaic. And Mosaic is not mine. Wow. These messages do not pull their punches.

The voice then instructs me that 'There are women in Mosaic who are meant to leave and go on to further learning outside Mosaic.' I have to see that I am stopping them. Their time in Mosaic is meant to end. I understand that 'the Lessons from Mosaic are the point and not Mosaic.' I instantly know that Yes, my soul did choose to come to Earth to learn these difficult lessons. I am not here against my will and I have to learn these lessons. I have to take the plunge to terminate immediately. I look out the window again and let the thoughts sink into a place of profound knowing inside me. I have been given the greatest gift of crucial insight. A great sense of balance is restored in me. Everything has a purpose. Nothing happens without a reason. I can breathe again. Now I have to find a way to communicate with God again. How do I ask Him to help me with this terrible task?

If I ignore the messages I put myself at risk. My heart cries out and my head says no. I have refused to look at the signposts and take notice of them over and over again. I ultimately have to follow my head. The second group has to leave Mosaic.

On Friday I discuss it with the first group who now knows that the second group has to leave. I know that they are petrified for the second group to know that they are leaving. They also have huge feelings of guilt because they know they are staying. But in class our community workers discuss our thoughts about Mosaic's crisis.

Journal April 1998

"Fear is inextricably embedded in every aspect that I can think of right now. I know that I can have Fear or Faith but there is just fear, fear, fear. Fear of letting our second group of trained women go. Fear of breaking up the group. Fear of Mosaic being less than we are now. Fear of letting clients down. Fear of breaking promises. Fear of no more funding. Fear of the unknown. I am sure that the community workers are also full of Fear. We need to look at all of our fears in class this coming week. We have to write them all down and deal with them as they present themselves. Yet somehow I don't fear the end of Mosaic because I feel that we shall still keep a smaller more focused Mosaic going when the second group leaves us. Maybe this is wishful thinking. Without funding Mosaic will also have to end as well."

The Group Divided

It is the beginning of the dreaded month of May of 1998. Now my days seem to be clearer and there is a purpose to cutting down staff and saving Mosaic. I am nervous and afraid to face the second group of community workers.

At home I prepare myself for a very difficult day in Gugulethu. It is with such reluctance that I tear myself away from the safety of my home. I am the one who has to break the news to all of them. I pray for guidance and strength. As much as I struggle and I am fearful and I do not want to do this, I cannot postpone it any longer. I know that we have to talk about their termination. It is very important to address this now.

It is Thursday and the first and second groups come into class. We begin with our prayer and hymn. The singing is wonderful and I use the time to bring stability to myself. I pray to God to please be with all of us during my interaction with them. The second group is wary and they know that something is about to happen. I feel ill and my tummy feels like an uncomfortable hard rock. I have to tell the second group that they may have to leave Mosaic. We start the go-around and I talk quietly. My voice is weak. I pull myself together and drop the bombshell before I change my mind.

I tell the second group that when they first began their training at Mosaic I announced that unless funding comes into Mosaic they will have to leave Mosaic. At the end of this month of May if no funding arrives we shall have to let them go in July. I shall give them three months' notice. It is hard for all of us to go through this termination period. We hope to have the youth and court projects funded. If we get funding we can probably still employ the women who are already involved in these projects.

I see their bodies and faces sink. I want to dash from class and escape. Some handle it quite well but some are very upset. I say that I shall try everything to find placements for them in other organisations. I open options for them such as the catering course in

Langa and I say that I shall let the Network know that they are available for employment. It is clear that most of them are relieved that the waiting is over. They are pleased that there are still another three months and hoping against hope, they anticipate that we shall get funding. During these three months we can work through issues and further try and resolve them. We have to find funding.

During the go-around they say that they appreciate my honesty. We realise that it has been very difficult for all of us and for those women staying at Mosaic as well. At this moment I give them great credit for accepting our decision. I hope that later on they do not feel differently and that their anger does not erupt when the realisation of losing their jobs hits home.

We work for weeks looking at our fears. In this way they know that I am as much involved as they are. We have to look at our fears both as victims and as survivors. During our discussions they begin to feel that they are victims. Then they finally acknowledge that this happens for a reason greater than all of us, and greater than Mosaic.

Over the termination period we look at the Grand Plan and know that we are all meant to learn from this. Those who have to leave have to do so for their own soul's growth. We are all survivors and the life skills that they learn from Mosaic will always be inside them. We realise that nothing is forever and perhaps the second group will return to Mosaic one day and bring other skills back into the organisation. Because they are distressed and the information is upsetting, we are lucky that the days proceed emotionally but not uncontrollably. They leave class each week discussing what we have spoken about. They are downhearted and some are very unhappy. I feel sick at heart.

I am in class with my community workers on Friday morning following the last of the second group's supervision. During the go-around, Dawn says that the advice about termination that we had with the second group was such a privilege for her to experience. They are learning so much about saying goodbye to people who they are close to. They will have to contain the pain of termination with their own groups one day.

Caroline says that before coming to supervision she was so weak. She was afraid and did not want to come to class because of what I

had to tell everyone about the second group's termination. She also says that it is another learning experience for her because she realises that no matter how difficult it is to do something it is important to confront it.

I tell her that I feel the same way. I tell them my stomach has been knotted because I had to tell the second group about leaving Mosaic. We all agree that it is only fair to terminate with them now so that we can all come to terms with their leaving. They are happy that yesterday is over. They also understand that what they learnt during the module about termination in theory, is now becoming real.

I sense that the first group also needs healing. There will be more responsibility placed on them because they will have to work without their trained helpers to deliver services to their clients. The second group are their friends and the women whom they brought to Mosaic. There is a feeling of great loss in the group this morning for when the time comes to say goodbye.

We speak about our concerns. They also wonder how long they will be employed with Mosaic. Without funding their future also seems threatened. There is anger in the group about funding that has not been received and they all know how angry I am. We understand that without money there is no choice and the day of reckoning will come. We all have to cry and grieve and vent our anger. We have to deal with not understanding and sensing that this has not been fair.

All day in this difficult supervision session I am aware that I am open to guidance. I allow myself to be used and moved and am often amazed at how I handle difficult things once I am immersed in them. The whole process and the timing has been fascinating. During my Social Work training we learnt that there has to be a perfect time for termination. So many things are worked through with the second group during the three months termination. So many thoughts and feelings are debated and considered. But we are bankrupt. Finally we all plunge downhill into the root of pain and anger and our fear of losing our second group. Ultimately we return strongly to our faith, knowing that 'what will be will be'. It is such a period of faith testing. Such a period of testing ourselves as well.

I recognise how far we have come and how much we have dealt with. Everyone takes part in this experience in such a brave and

honest way. How the first group has not split is a miracle. We are finding a clearer direction and seem to be moving through the chaos despite the pain that we still carry. I can see more light although at times I still wobble and fall. There is still a long way to go.

I now have another problem. Sheilla who lives in Nyanga as does Ntombi tells me that Ntombi has been behaving badly in the community. At the beginning of this week she shouted and swore in the streets of Nyanga and she disgraced herself and Mosaic. Ntombi criticised and blamed Mosaic as she has told people in the community that Mosaic has money but we are dishonestly telling our community workers that we are bankrupt and they have to leave Mosaic. Sheilla says that there are a lot of people who witnessed Ntombi's behaviour. Sheilla is angry with Ntombi. She does not think that she deserves to be at Mosaic. Ntombi is scheming with Nita who hangs around with her and from where she probably got her incorrect information. I am definitely not happy to hear this news. I keep on thinking about Mosaic's damaged reputation with the people of Nyanga, the community where Sheilla works.

Before class I confront Ntombi privately outside the classroom. I tell her what I know about her aggressive behaviour that happened in Nyanga. She disagrees with me but I tell her that with her misconduct which can be validated by people in the community she is not a proper role model for Mosaic. I tell her that she cannot be employed by Mosaic. For me it is quick and irreversible. Ntombi has to go. I do not trust Ntombi. I never trusted her. My instincts are correct. Correct behaviour is written into her contract and loss of 'trust' is a big issue for being dismissed.

When our community workers settle into our circle Sheilla tells them about Ntombi's behaviour and what happened in Nyanga. They are horrified. When someone behaves as badly as Ntombi it can be dangerous for them and harmful to Mosaic. I tell them that I have just told Ntombi that she is no longer a community worker and she has now left the premises. They are relieved but they feel apprehensive for our safety.

We have lived what seems like a thousand days and we have ridden the thousand days like a roller coaster. Up and down. Up and down. They are filled with heavy nights of turmoil and uncertainty

and are filled with mornings when I wake up from dark and disturbing snippets of dreams. Then I lie tossing and turning trying to work out ways of finding solutions, and searching for money to continue Mosaic. And on and on... I toss and turn until I drag myself out of bed and to go to work.

I worry how women like the courageous Nomvuzo will survive without income. She has five boys to feed and she beads and smocks little girl's dresses at night by candle light. She grows her own vegetables for her own consumption. I worry about trying to find ways of keeping Leonorah and still maintain ownership of the Mitchells Plain court project.

During the go-around this week my community workers and I talk about how we can try and keep some of the second group. Nomvuzo and Leonorah can be active in the permaculture and court projects. We discuss the sensitive issue of why these two women should stay on and not the other women.

We speak about Eunice who is also misbehaving and how she is also keeping company with women who are engaged in dubious activities in Nyanga. I tell them how Eunice expects me to subsidise her with groceries in her Spaza shop. There is no way that I can do this as the little money that I have needs to stay in Mosaic. Yet she is manipulating me into feeling obliged to support her. The group is annoyed with Eunice and they agree that some of the second group are not easy to deal with.

They share information with me about Nita and how angry she is and how she speaks to people in the community about how much she hates the community workers who are allowed to stay on with Mosaic. They tell me how she seriously bad-mouths Mosaic and me.

Everyone wants to know what I am going to do about Eunice and Nita. I say that I am going to have to unmask the issues of badmouthing and undermining Mosaic. This is scary for us as it can cause so much damage. Our good reputation is crucial if we want the community people and community leaders to have respect for us and support our services. In every way, Mosaic has to be clean and we have to stop the sabotage at the source.

I do not think anyone wants to come into class when we have our last lesson with our second group. We are all dreading it. On

Wednesday night I plead with God 'Please God I don't want to go into class tomorrow.' I dread going in because we had such a heavy day with the first group anticipating what we are going to have to deal with during our final session in class today.

Today we have the very last session with the second group. It is the end of June and a heart-breaking day for all of us. There are a number of women whom I shall be very sad to say goodbye to. It is the day of breaking ties that bind us because we are totally bankrupt.

We start off with our usual go-around and Gladys is very angry and tearful about leaving. She believes that we have money and that we just want to use it as an excuse to get rid of some of them and keep the ones we want. I explain that since November I have put my own divorce money into Mosaic. I have come to realise that I cannot do this anymore. I explain that the little bit of sponsorship money that we have at present cannot see us all through. I thank her for sharing her thoughts with us and I am not sure if she feels better afterwards.

Eunice's body language is fascinating. Everyone in the group is aware of this. She sits herself down and crosses her arms in a defiant way and she stares out of the window all morning. During the go-around she shares an awful story with us and despite everything I feel sorry for her. She tells us that the day before her two sons were fighting with each other with knives. There is blood all over her house. The story softens me towards her and I agree to sponsor her with a small amount of money to buy some groceries for her Spaza shop. I am sorry for Eunice. These women have so much to bear.

I am grateful that I have money in my pocket, a house that belongs to me and food on my table. These women will struggle to survive without their jobs. I actually do not want to think about this. The reality of today makes me feel incapable and completely dreadful.

At the end of today we all pray and sing our hymns. Then with enormous reluctance to take leave of each other, and some distance placed between me and some of the women, we all hug each other Goodbye. I feel from the hugs who are still angry with me and who have care and sympathy for me. When the classroom is empty I cannot wait to leave Gugulethu and head for home.

Yesterday passes and tiny Nita is not in class when we terminate with our second group. But today she marches right into the community worker's supervision with her cocky little walk and sits down next to me. I am shocked as she is not meant to be in class and I am not expecting to see her. I absolutely have to confront her with what she has been saying about Mosaic in the community.

Noxolo is talking to me when she comes in and I allow Noxolo to continue. I beg God to help me handle the situation. I do not want her to cause chaos in the group. I want to handle her as assertively as I can and use the incident as a learning lesson for all the community workers who are observing me very closely.

She aggressively thrusts her doctor's certificate at me for her absence from class yesterday. Her button black eyes are boring into mine and the muscles in her cheeks are jumping with anger. She is ready to fight. She says that she is still flying the Mosaic flag and I ask her how she can say that when she is talking about Mosaic in the community in an angry and aggressive way. I say that, from the people to whom she has been talking, it is obvious that she wants the information to get back to me.

Nita says she is angry and she has a right to be angry. I remind her that when I agreed to train the second group there was the understanding that they would not necessarily be employed by Mosaic. I ask her why she takes it personally when there are others in the same position who also have to leave. During the course of her outburst she says that she has not said anything about suing Mosaic or 'getting back' at Mosaic. I point out that we have not heard anything about her wanting to sue Mosaic so having said this, it is obviously something that she has been thinking about. She tries to implicate Sheilla who is smirking with anger next to her and who extricates herself from Nita's aggressive and embarrassing behaviour. Nita also scarily implies that we are not safe in Gugulethu at Uluntu Centre. She says that 'those women' who had to leave Mosaic and who she has been speaking to can pose a threat to our safety. I immediately think of one whom I do not trust and who I think has gang connections. It is clear to me that she has caused disgruntlement with 'those women' and stirred them up. In this way she has put us in a potentially dangerous situation.

I shall always remember Nita asking me “What kind of a place is this Mosaic?”

All I can say to Nita now is “Truly I don’t know what kind of a place this is. All I know is, that it is your behaviour that is ultimately important to Mosaic, not the knowledge or skills you may have. You have known from the start that disrespect, lies and hidden agendas are forbidden in Mosaic and that anyone who cannot behave honestly has no place in the organisation. Yet I also know Nita that you have no memory or appreciation of what we have been through together. I have tried to help you with the problems with your sisters, coming to terms with your abuse, your fire in your home, your lost books, the glasses you needed. Or maybe this is the very reason why you still want to be with Mosaic. Although you may not see it, it is only your attitude and betrayal of Mosaic that has been your downfall. Not me nor Mosaic.”

After some time she calms down a bit but when she walks out again she is still angry. Now I can see why the first group thinks that she is volatile and not suitable for the job. All through the process I open myself up to guidance from God and I am grateful that although I am tense inside, I am outwardly composed during this confrontation.

Afterwards Sheilla says that she observed me carefully as I dealt with Nita. She learns so much about how she can conduct herself in a highly charged and potentially explosive situation. I am pleased that she voices her thoughts because it is one of my goals to teach by example.

For a while and particularly after the incident with Nita I am concerned about bringing money into Gugulethu. Nita’s actions create a serious problem for us where slanderous words can easily incite violent reactions. I must make arrangements to move the group back to my home until I feel that enough water has flowed under the bridge and everyone settles after this whole traumatic episode.

I am always aware that I am a white woman in a still politically unstable township, a stone’s throw away from where Amy Biehl was murdered. Caroline is concerned that we can be held up at gunpoint. On Fridays instead of Gugulethu we shall meet in Sea Point at my home for supervision.



*Picture of community workers being supervised
at my home in Sea Point*

Dawn, Hilda, Noxolo, Sheilla and Jean

We realise that it is necessary for us to hit a crisis and that women who are not meant to be in Mosaic have now left Mosaic. There is no other way that this could happen. The absolute rightness, the exactness of every single challenge and aspect of what we experience, is incredible in its perfection.

We feel that things are different now. There is a strong foundation with our women that has dug deeply and set. This is our core of women who will take Mosaic into the future. For me, it feels right. The group will have to work slowly and differently now because there are fewer of them. We shall still carry on and help abused women who need our support. For the first time in ages I feel much safer. My hair no longer stands on end and I am not tortured by anxiety.

We all agree that these invaluable experiences are gifted to us for our future growth and development. God knows the reasons why this has happened. I also begin to listen to my inner voice and know that I cannot allow anyone to persuade me to take on someone of whom I am in doubt. I must realise that I must only consider for inclusion in our group the person who gives off comfortable vibes. I

pray that I shall not be caught again. But being human I know that I can be caught again. I think that the episodes with Ntombi, Eunice and Nita have taught me huge lessons. I also know that the ones who give us the biggest problems are the ones from whom we all learn the most. I am eternally grateful to everyone and most of all to the Process that has guided us.

Perhaps by the end of the year depending on the promised allocation of funding from the Department of Social Services we may still be able to re-employ some of our well-trained workers who had to leave us. Then all obstacles will be cleared away and we can hopefully enter the new era of Mosaic.

Journal June 1998

‘Today was an ordinary Tuesday and I returned home at lunch time. Teen met me at the front door. It was only the two of us as Marieta had already left the office. She told me to sit down and I could hear that she had exciting news to share with me. I sat down on the bottom step at the front door.

And she said “Guess?” And then she told me that we had just received a cheque from the Department of Social Services for R142,350! My jaw dropped open! I am not often speechless but I just sat in stunned silence. Then we hugged each other and I thanked God for what we’d just received. We got into my car and sped through to town to fetch the cheque. I am going to colour photocopy it before I bank it this week! It is truly a breakthrough in so many ways. We fetch the cheque with such joy in our hearts.”

Oh what Miracle of Miracles. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Thank You God for this funding that will keep Mosaic going for a while longer. With this funding we can re-employ six out of the best sixteen women from the second group. There are no words for my gratitude for this funding. It is synchronistic and too enormous for words. We shall still have to be very careful financially until the end of the year, but now the New Year holds such great possibilities.

When I tell our women they cannot believe it. Everyone gets up and hugs each other and smiles with tears in their eyes. We have prayed for this money forever. We have struggled in difficult conditions and made many sacrifices. We did not know if we could survive financially. Now we do not have to worry. At this moment

and with this funding I can see the possibility of the fulfilment of our vision. Now we shall continue to reach thousands of abused women over the next few years. The future is possible.

There are rules and regulations attached to a Government grant and Marieta says that she can easily do them. It is more money than we have ever received and much more than I ever thought that we would get. What a gift to think that there is all this money in our account. I have little emotional ecstasies of joy every time I think of this funding. I have the feeling that everything will unfold much more easily now. It is a milestone in our 'herstory'! We all feel that we have at last given birth to Mosaic.

Today I sing in my car. I sing out all the thanks that come to me. Thank you God for this most precious gift of funding. Thank you for the luxury of waking up at night and feeling so held, so secure, so comforted. Thank you for sitting on the shoulder of the Department of Social Services and for opening them up to Mosaic's wonderful work. Thank you for supporting us and allowing us to carry on.

I sing out loudly expressing my relief and my freedom to move forward now with the promise of funding to carry on. Now Mosaic's vision and goals have the strongest possibilities of being reached. The promise will be kept. The covenant to be made with the Spirit World is not a figment of my imagination. It is suddenly as real as reality.

As I sing with such joyous abandon, I remember all the nights when I woke up with such feelings of dread not knowing what the future would hold in store. I recall the nightmares and restless dreams about what we faced each day and the adrenalin coursing through my veins as if burglars were standing next to me as I turned over in bed. My endless piercing stares into the vast darkness. The desperate searching with only my uncertain faith in God as a guide into the great unanswered question mark of what lies ahead.

I sing as I give thanks for the past few nights when I cuddled down after waking up, snuggling into my pillows and sheets with such a deep and warm gratitude inside of me. I sing the feelings of being loved and cared for by my family, my Guides and by my Supreme Architect, my God of the Grand Plan.

My heart wildly sings because we can re-employ Lungiswa, Primrose, Mia, Leonorah, Zoleka and Nomvuzo the six best of the

second group's members. Now they will become an integrated part of Mosaic's community workers.

It is the end of July and Teen and Marieta work concertedly on our Annual Report for our first Annual General Meeting. Martine collects the data from our community workers' services. Marieta inserts pictures that I take of our community workers with our clients. She busily works on the designs on her computer for the layout. I am grateful to Marieta that she knows enough about computers to design our Annual Report. Teen and Marieta also have to attend meetings with our accountants to finalise our Financial Statements for our Report. The 1997/1998 Annual Report is in black and white with the cover page and pictures and printing done on computer paper. I am so excited. It is our first Annual Report for our first AGM.

In class we all have to prepare for and plan for our Annual General Meeting. We want to have it on the 9th August on National Women's Day. It is right for our women's organisation to celebrate on this day. One of our Board members arranges for us to have it at Woolworth's Offices in town in one of their lecture rooms with raised seats.

August is a frenetic month. Apart from the preparations for our two fundraising events, one at the Kenilworth Racecourse and the movie 'Nil by Mouth', there is our AGM. For the days before and after our AGM, our community workers and I are asked to speak at different events and to be in charge of a planned stand for Mosaic at the Civic Centre. There is a lot to arrange for the AGM. We have to invite a guest speaker. Everyone must take a part. We have to work out who does what.

Over the past two years Josephine begins the Mosaic's Youth Group with some of the children from Mbekweni and Paarl. Josephine practices dance routines with them, the youth create plays and she counsels them. I want our youth group from Mbekweni to entertain our guests at our AGM. On the morning of the AGM I go through to Paarl to rehearse the routine with the 17 children and their choreographer. I bundle some of them into my combi with Isabe the Social Worker taking the rest in her car. We get back to Cape Town to rehearse once more before the AGM starts at 6pm.

There are four little ones in the group who are so adorable and who delight the guests. The Mbekweni children make such an impact from the moment that they start singing the hymn 'Senzeni Na - what have we done, our sin is to be children' and with their hands in prayer formation in front of some of them. Tears fall down some of their faces and we are all moved. The tiniest little praise singer who is dressed in animal skins and who has a swatch cries the praises of Mosaic in Xhosa. There is hardly a dry eye in the auditorium.

The kids end their programme by dancing and singing 'Igamelama kosikazi malibongwe - let the name of women be praised'. Everyone laughs delightedly at the little ones who are copying the more sophisticated dance movements of the older ones and really enjoying themselves in the process.

The Director of Social Services is our guest speaker. She speaks wonderfully saying that what strikes her most forcefully about Mosaic is that we are community based, that our services are culturally appropriate, that we are an interfaith organisation and that we unashamedly include God in our Annual Report. She says that it is not something that you really find with NGOs. We are all so proud and happy.



Martine, me, Mom and Trevor at the AGM

The AGM is a great success. Afterwards we bundle the children back into the vehicles with their food that we prepared for them. We

drive them back to Mbekweni. I return home after 10pm. It is just another day at Mosaic.

Lisa one of our Board members is a presenter on Cape Talk Radio and I am asked to speak on air several times. One of the hour's interviews this week is with Advocate Hishaam Mohammed, the Regional Director of Justice for the Western Cape. I must be certain to know what I am talking about regarding the three new Bills that are being passed. I have to know about the amendments to the New Family Act which is mainly about Protection Orders, about the New Maintenance Bill and the New Customary Marriages Bill.

In addition, the Department of Social Services has chosen Mosaic as one of seven out of over seven hundred organisations to work in partnership with them on a project. What an honour to be chosen. The work that Marieta and I have to do for the new partnership with Government involves major paper work regarding our activities. They want twenty proposals from us but eventually agree to accept five. We are so relieved. Marieta will work to finish them and submit them.

On the 10th of September I receive an invitation from Ken Lutterman in the United States. He invites me to attend a Suicide Prevention Conference in Reno. It is difficult to leave my community workers and all that we have to do in Cape Town. At first I thank him for the invitation but I say that I am too committed to Mosaic to accept. I feel that I need to be present in our class sessions and take part in everything else that is happening at the moment.. However Marieta and Martine persuade me to go. I have them to back me up when I am gone.

I still have to work on funding proposals to Global Fund for Women and to Rotary International for a matching grant before I leave. There is also a great gift to Mosaic in the form of a contract with the Round Table Clubs in Cape Town. I go on raids to the different clubs with our sponsor club Rondebosch, to tell them about Mosaic and I receive the proceeds of their sales from selling Xmas trees. I do not think that I ever work so hard or furiously as I do before I leave for Reno. There is major planning around my leaving the office and all that will take place while I am away.

On the Thursday night before I leave Cape Town, Marieta and I work until 10.30pm tying up loose ends and making sure that everything that she needs from me is complete. All I can say is thank goodness for Teen and Marieta because without them in the office I certainly could never leave Mosaic. I feel that leaving everyone to get on without me is going to lift a lot of responsibility off my shoulders. I want to continue spreading this responsibility when I get back. My community workers tell me that they need to meet the challenges without me. It makes me feel good and I can depart with a light heart.

Give and Give

In October I return from my trip to Reno. Whilst I am away I am pleased that the members of the second group have merged with our first group of community workers. They all continue to do good work. Today I tell them that I am grateful to Ken for inviting me. It is an eye opener, emotional, fulfilling and distressing. It would be amazing to have a suicide prevention group in Cape Town because many of our abused women commit suicide. I share the knowledge that I received in Reno and they agree that suicide prevention services would be valuable as some of them know people in their communities who have committed suicide. Some of their clients who survive the suicide of a loved one feel guilty because they think they may have caused the person to take their own life. They say that the material that I give to them will definitely be used with their clients.

Six of the second group are now part of our permanent staff because we have received funding for them from the Department of Social Services for the court work project. Today all of them are excited to be integrated with our first group and share their client's stories with us. They bring us back to earth and show us how crucial their work is for abused women. It is a long session but we are pleased to hear about what they have been doing.

Lungiswa shares her client's story *"My client came to me very distressed, nervous and tearful. She is married with two small children. She told me how once she shared intimate stories with her husband about her childhood. She told him how she was physically and sexually abused as a young girl and that this led to her becoming sexually involved with different men when she was a teenager. When her husband started to verbally abuse her he would throw all this information back in her face in front of her children and family. He used to call her ugly names that hurt her and made her feel very ashamed. My client became fearful and forgetful and couldn't sleep. She would start to shake uncontrollably and didn't know what to do. Because her husband didn't beat her she didn't want to divorce him. After counselling her, she decided that she wanted to get a Protection Order and to continue to come to me for counselling. I taught her about*

assertiveness behaviour and she decided to practice it with her husband. This helped her a lot. My client and her husband are still together and the children are not like shy little mice anymore because she has become strong. She has empowered her children too. She has confidence and she now teaches Sunday school at our church. Her husband also attend church with her and her children.”

Then I ask Primrose to share her client’s story with us. *“My client who was pregnant was referred to me by her brother. She has no money and was starving. She had just returned from Johannesburg where she went to find her husband who had left her and her five children. When she got to Johannesburg her husband and his family and girlfriend shouted at her and threw her out. Her sister-in-law took the children and she was dumped in an old shack without food or blankets. A neighbour spotted her and gave her food and warm water to wash. No one else would interfere as they were afraid of her husband who was violent and had a gun. One day the neighbour heard the husband and girlfriend planning to murder her. She quickly gathered money from the neighbours and they sent my client on the bus back to Cape Town without her children. During counselling my client was panicking about her children. She decided to stay with her brother and prepare herself for the birth of her new baby. She prayed every day for the safety of her children without her. She decided to use the money from her brother to buy small things that she could sell. She came to see me three more times and each time she gained more understanding and strength to move on with her life. The last time she came to see me she said that her brother and his girlfriend were starting to abuse her and she wasn’t getting any food. However, her eldest sister phoned her from Mthatha asking her to come to live with her as she is now a widow. My client was looking forward to going to her sister who wants to help her financially to start a business. She hopes to earn enough money so that she can fetch her children from Johannesburg.”*

Zoleka shares *“My client is a born again Christian and didn’t believe in divorce. Her husband was having an affair with another woman who lived close to their house. He was cheeky and abusive, didn’t communicate and slept out every night. He traumatised his 18 year old son by telling him to fetch food from his girlfriend’s house. My client was very upset. She had lost a lot of weight and she was crying when she came to see me. I counselled her in terms of her plan of action and about her feelings. After opening options she decided to go for a Protection Order and she said she wanted him out of the house. I referred her to Phillipi Court. When she came back with the interim Protection Order she was really*

confident. She was convinced that she made the right decision. She now knows that abuse is against God's will. She is glad that she has stood up for her rights."

Nomvuso talks quietly and with dignity. *"My client came to Phillipi court because her husband was abusing her and their children. She was a cultural bride and married to her husband for 16 years. She was in the Eastern Cape and when she came to Cape Town she found out that her husband got legally married to another woman. Her husband chased her out of the house claiming that the house belonged to him and his new wife. She came to me presenting with this problem. I counselled her in terms of her rights and she came to understand that she can speak to people who can help her and that she can stand up for herself. She went to the Street Committee and they helped her to win back her house. I referred her to the police station and she took out a Protection Order and wrote an affidavit. She was very happy and grateful to me and she said a big thank you. I was happy for her."*

Leonora talks confidently *"My client is 24 years old and the eldest of 4 children. Her father beat her mom, wouldn't give her money and when they were all starving her mother had to ask their neighbours for food. There were times when her father chased them all out of the house and they had to sleep with neighbours. My client told me that she had hated her father. When she was 15 her mother passed away from a stroke and she never stopped blaming her father. She kept on saying that she wanted revenge and the hatred showed in her eyes. I counselled her in terms of feelings, thoughts, opinions and experiences. We spoke about the lessons that could be learnt from situations like that. We spoke about channelling her anger constructively and about the painful loss of her mother.*

After I counselled her she said that the heavy load on her shoulders was off loaded. There was hope in her eyes and she felt stronger and lighter. She said that the feeling that I cared, listened and supported her really did wonders. Counselling changed her mind-set. I was so happy to see that she focused on her life right now. She is going on with her studies."

Mia is the last to share her story about her young client. *"My client told me that she was HIV positive and that her husband left her when she told him. Her husband denied that he was positive although he had never been tested. My client said that she hadn't slept with other men. Her husband refused to support her and their two children. He continued to sleep with other women. I counselled her and she came to an understanding that she could live for a long time by taking medication and attending an HIV support group. I also referred her to the court for a Protection Order and for Maintenance. I prepared her for talking*

to her mother about her HIV status. When I saw her again I was so glad. Her face changed and she had a big smile. She told her mother about her HIV status and she was so relieved because someone in the family knew about her and would support her and her little family."

They all seem to have gained from my being away and they are surer of themselves and have grown in stature. They are no longer my underdeveloped second group but are empowered women in their own right. It was important to leave them on their own when they were brought back into Mosaic.

I share some of my thoughts that I had while I was overseas. I see that the biggest growth area in Mosaic will be the development of the volunteer programme and especially in the court programme. They all know that we are short of court workers especially with the increase in Magistrate's courts that want our services.

When I share my thoughts they are sceptical. In fact they are surprised because they know what it entails. It means recruiting and training more Mosaic workers. And they know what recently happened to the second group of community workers. Dawn throws her hands up in the air and says "Rolene, don't go there!" I smile but I know that we have to train court workers who can take the burden from them by helping abused applicants in court. It becomes too much for our community workers and their statistics are suffering. They need to return to their communities and educate the people about abuse, run workshops and support groups. But Mosaic needs help with court work and we must train court volunteers.

I tell them that we shall train the volunteers and their training will be in payment for their court services. Our community workers can then rely on the volunteers because they will be properly trained to work in our Court Support Desk's project. Our Court Support Desks will absorb the increase in applications and help the courts with the lengthy process of filling out the Protection Orders.

As I talk about it, it is a reality that will happen. Training the volunteers will contribute to and increase our valuable community services for abused women in the different areas of Cape Town. We are at last excited. They tell me that there are a number of women who want to be trained as volunteers without payment from Mosaic. We need to train as many Xhosa speaking volunteers to work in the

courts as possible. These volunteers want our training and we need their services. I tell the community workers that the volunteers will not be trained by me. Some of our community workers will train them with me early next year. They are all surprised and excited.

I shall have to abbreviate certain of the modules to train the court volunteers. Because of my trip to the States and the end of this year's urgency to complete things I am not able to start writing the two day's Abuse and Assertiveness workshops and the eight day's Counselling skills training course. I am seriously worried. The training materials will still have to be completed in January and February next year and finished in double quick time because the courts open at the beginning of March.

It is now the 20th November 1998. Next month is already December and the year will soon be over. We have three weeks to go before our end-of-the-year holiday. I am frightened by the thought of the amount of work to be completed.

Journal December 1998

"Marieta, community workers and I work out a rough schedule for delivering the Abuse Assertiveness (A/A) workshops. We are so happy because different organisations have sponsored them for us.

Some of the volunteers could someday become Mosaic's staff members so their training is really crucial and they have to know what they are doing. They will be accountable to Mosaic and we shall be responsible for them and their behaviour when working in the courts.

Training our community workers to be 'trainers of the volunteers' is not the same as training them to 'train their clients'. Volunteers and clients are not the same. They must be precise in their information giving and they will have to be demanding of the volunteers. For me, only the best volunteers will be successful. I have to train some of our community workers to run these training workshops. It is difficult to choose community workers because they all want to learn more skills and they all want to become trainers. I want to train Leonorah who started working in Mitchells Plain court to train the volunteers and supervise them when they begin working. However, I eventually decide to train Mia, Caroline, Sheilla, Dawn, Hilda and Noxolo to run training courses as well. I don't actually realise how difficult training trainers will be. The role-plays won't be easy for them. Not

for any of us. They have trained with me as their trainer but being trainers themselves will be difficult.

I know that the other women will be disappointed but our community work has to carry on. They will carry on with their regular client services. On the days that the trainers don't run training courses they will be back serving in their communities.

I have to get my head seriously around writing the material that they will use for training the volunteers. The Abuse and Assertiveness modules should not be too difficult. It is the writing of the abbreviated Counselling course that frightens me. There is a lot to look at in their Counselling Module and a lot to condense that has to be relevant”.

I am so excited because it is the 14th December and we have the end of the year party for our staff. We start with our go-around that takes place at my home. Some of our board members are together with us as well as my folks. This year we can give each of the community workers R1,500 Xmas bonus and a raise in their salaries. They totally do not expect this. To see their reactions makes us all emotional. They are all in tears.

They speak about how they tried to speculate as to how much they were going to get. They were all too nervous to even think that they might get R1,000. Now they cannot get over the fact that not only have they received more than they had dared to hope for, but they also get an unexpected raise in salary.

When they each have a chance to say how they feel about their bonus, Nomvuzo says that now she will be able to fix the leaks in her roof of her shack. She did not know how she was going to be able to do this.

Dawn says that she just wanted Xmas to come and go because she was worried not knowing how she was going to find enough money to send Nathan to High School next year. Now she can enjoy Xmas and New Year and buy his uniform and pay for his school fees.

Hilda speaks about her husband who recently had to leave his job as a caretaker after thirty years of employment. He has been very sick and when he left his job he got a pittance from the Body Corporate. Now she is able to support them especially with her raised salary.

Mia says that she has had a difficult time with her husband. Now she can buy new tyres for her car that she desperately needs. She does not have to ask him for money and be at his mercy again.

Several of the women speak about clearing their debts that have hung over their heads and have given them sleepless nights. This bonus gives them so much relief. And Lungiswa asks her colleagues to please sing a hymn because she is so emotional she cannot speak. We are all in tears as the hymn is sung.

They deserve this bonus and salary raise because their loyalty to Mosaic has been incredible. They have worked with little reward for all this time and at last we can reward them for their work. All of them thank Mosaic and thank God for this wonderful gift. They speak about how difficult it has been to stay with Mosaic but they are so pleased and proud that they persevered. They also thank each other for being there for them and they thank Teen, Marieta and me for all that we have done for them. The love and the gratitude emanates from each of us and encompasses us all. Teen takes a video of us. It is so moving. As they are talking my heart is expanding to bursting point with gratitude to God. I have been waiting for this sweet day and this excruciatingly sweet feeling of happiness, relief, delight and gratitude. It completely consumes me.

After the go-around and when we have finished our supervision for the year, we have a Makoti, or cultural bride ceremony for Teen before her wedding at the end of this month. It is an ancient Xhosa ceremony performed for generations in their traditional communities. The community workers want to do this for Martine and it is a mark of respect for her.

Some of the community workers dress Teen in the office downstairs. She wears a blanket around her shoulders and body and a scarf around her head. They escort her up the stairs. She has to sit on a special mat in the lounge. She is not allowed to look at any of us as her head is down and they lead her 'blindly' to the mat. The humour is already starting as we see her coming up the stairs.

We are fascinated that we are included to watch the ceremony. But there is humour because the community workers are in charge and they are taking delight in treating her as a real Makoti. Then give her all the advice that the family and especially the in-laws give to a

Makoti. They are even exaggerating the advice and we are all killing ourselves laughing. It is hard to believe how demeaning and abusive the cultural practices are for their cultural brides. Although we are laughing, for a real Makoti, this is a humiliating and serious ceremony.

They tell her that she has to obey all the advice that they give to her. She must respect her in laws, she can never look at her father in law and has to walk behind him. She has to serve them off a special tray called an Isithebe without looking at them and she cannot eat certain foods. She has to wear special printed clothing, have a scarf around her shoulders and wear a scarf on her head. She cannot take it off even when it is very hot. So it goes on.

Martine sits quietly on her mat looking at the floor and has to take this all in. It is really so funny and now we are all laughing out loud and enjoying the whole procedure. Then the community workers give her the Makoti name of Nomsa which means patience, tolerance and self-control. Again it is a mark of respect for Teen who has cared for them and worked with them over the years.

After the ceremony Teen changes her clothes and we have a final go-around with our year's review of all that has happened this year. Then we have a slap-up celebratory lunch with lots of talking and laughing. It is time to end off this wonderful day. With lots of huge hugs and kisses they all leave at 3.30pm. Once Teen, my mom and Marieta have helped me to clean up they also go home. Then I fall into a dead sleep. I am exhausted but very happy. What a stunningly beautiful day. Today God was truly with us.

It is the day before Christmas and I receive the most exciting news. What a way to end off 1998. My friend Beryl works with the Argus Newspaper and she is introduced to me through Mal and Tom our mutual friends in America. Beryl lets us know that she put Mosaic's name forward as one of the recipients for proceeds from the Weekend Argus' Charity jackpot. We shall receive R45,000 in January. How amazing is that? I thank Beryl very much for putting us forward for the proceeds. Out of the blueness of the sky falls a major whack of money. What is so exciting for me is that we do not have to beg for or humbly request this funding. It is given to us for the services that we render to abused women. It is wonderful recognition for Mosaic. There will be a photopic and article about us

in the Argus. This is an opportunity for the wider population to know what we are doing, and for abused women to make use of our services.

On Monday Teen and I go on our rounds to deliver Xmas gifts to our Board members to say thank you to them for their time and support of Mosaic. They are thrilled with their gifts. It gives us such pleasure to deliver the gifts to them and recognise in some small way the thanks that we feel for their support during the year. We are very fortunate to have such a wonderful Board of Directors who have become our real friends.

We have good feelings about 1999. God is truly good.

We have had to go through fire and brimstone to get here but we know that only the finest steel is tempered in the fire and beaten to emerge resilient and strong.

Court Volunteers

It is January 1999. We are back at work. Everyone knows that we have to work under pressure until March. Then our court volunteers will be full trained and more Court Support Desks will be open. The Abuse/Assertiveness workshop which we call the A/A workshop is fairly easy for us to write and create. We have the information about Abuse and now we have to add the Assertiveness training and this includes role-plays. It is the first time that the trainers will train women in Abuse and Assertiveness and the Counselling module.

In class on Friday morning we look at their Abuse and Assertiveness Modules that they completed during their training. We have to abbreviate and combine together the two Modules of Abuse and Assertiveness in a short and powerful two day workshop. We read the original script and then reduce the parts that we can leave out.

We work on the role-plays for the Abuse and Assertiveness workshop. I work out the information that is necessary for these role-plays. We start with the role-plays that we did during their training using the husband who comes home from work and throws down his keys. It is the wife's behaviour that we have to repeatedly act out four times, ending with her assertiveness behaviour. It is especially difficult for the trainers to act realistically and meaningfully in the role plays. In the beginning they are self-conscious. I am annoyed with them when they read their notes written on their worksheets because their delivery is false and stilted. They have to learn the scenes off by heart.

Besides learning the words they have to laugh or cry, be angry, happy or sad during their role-plays. After they finish their scenes I recap their actions especially when they do not act realistically. They need to see what I am talking about. When they do not cry properly I pretend to cry louder. When they try to laugh ineffectively I imitate them artificially. In fact I overact for them and we all laugh at my

feedback. But they get the messages and the role-plays start to become real.

They eventually realise that they have to act naturally so that the role-plays come across as being accurate and not 'staged'. I encourage them and keep repeating that they have to be focused, to the point, brief and energetic. Sometimes they 'over play' their roles and then it all becomes laughable. We have many laughs with the 'actors' of the role-plays. We definitely need to laugh and no one takes offence. They know that it is a learning process.

In supervision the community workers critique the trainers while they practice the role-plays until we all feel that they are ready. Eventually they perform well and our trainers meet the high standards that I want them to reach. I trust them and I am happy that they can successfully train the volunteers in our workshop. The two day's training for the court volunteers is now complete and the trainers are happy with their performances. I tell them that I shall supervise their first training of the volunteers for the A/A workshop but from then on two of them will take turns to train them on their own.

On the first day of the workshop the trainers give the volunteers all the information about abuse. They do a number of role-plays depicting the ways that we usually respond when someone abuses us. The volunteers can see how women are abused and why women stay in abusive relationships. On the second day they teach them how to behave assertively. They role-play the ways that they can react towards the abuser. They give them skills that they can use when they need to be assertive.

The trainers group the volunteers into small groups with each trainer in one of the groups to supervise and support them. During this session the volunteers use their own personal problems to work out their assertiveness interactions. They practice these interactions with the trainers several times. They are actively involved throughout the two days' workshop.

Back in class on Friday the trainers tell their colleagues about their first A/A workshop. They are amazed at how the volunteers change in their mind-sets and emotions during the two days. They observe fully how the volunteers go through major transformations.

The trainers share some stories of the volunteers who radically change their behaviour. They say that one of the younger volunteers shared that they are like her family. They thank her and tell her that is her gift to them. Because of our confidentiality rule no names are mentioned.

In the workshop there is a Muslim woman whose husband is a major figure in her community. He is also the principal of a school. She is horrified to see that the only other Muslim woman in the workshop is a teacher at her husband's school. The trainers have to work hard with this woman. But on the second day of the workshop she changes. Even her scarf looks different. It is off her head and around her shoulders. She is able to tell the group how after the first day she went home and she responded to her husband's verbal abuse. She has never responded to him before. Everyone is proud of her and they commend her on facing her husband of whom she has always been afraid. She is very proud of herself and she feels good. Somehow, she says that she is not afraid of him anymore.

The trainers also tell the group of a young volunteer who breaks down and sobs during one of the abuse exercises. The volunteer tells everyone in the group how she has had a long history of psychiatric treatment. During the workshop she says that for the first time in her whole life she finds people who really listen to her and understand her. For the first time she can say that she feels stronger and she knows that she will get better. The trainers all applaud her for being honest with them. This is praise for the woman and for them.

A young white woman with a foreign accent attends this workshop. She is neatly dressed and presents herself as being intelligent, composed and rather uptight. She appears to be defensive. We find out that she works for one of the organisations that funds us to run the workshops. I think that she is sent by the funder to find out about us so that she can report back about the quality of the workshop. She does not fit into the group. After the first day she writes in her evaluation form that she thinks the workshop is 'fair' but she does not feel that the workshop has reached enough depth.

When I get home after that first day I tell Teen and Marieta that I am sure that one of the women will crack. I am just a bit worried because she works for the people who have funded us to run the

workshop. She cracks on the second day and catches us completely by surprise. During one of the exercises she suddenly runs out of the room. The trainers look at me with big eyes as she exits, as if to ask me 'what am I going to do?' I follow her outside and she is shaking. I speak to her quietly and ask her to have the courage to return to the group. I ask her how she will feel if she does not see it through. After a while she returns. She unnerves me and the trainers but they carry on training and are relieved when she returns. They look at me with relief and are pleased that I am with them when this happens. She finally admits that she is pleased that she returns to the group. It is a real compliment for us because we manage to break through her protective intellectual façade and she has to work with her emotions whether she wants to or not. So the training is effective and not only 'fair'. On the second day she thinks that the training is good, that we have reached more depth but she feels that it is too 'pushy'.

Journal January 1999

"It was a very close call for me today when the trainee ran out of our volunteer workshop. I believe that the workshops are remarkable. She is the only person to run out of the workshop and she also represents one of the funders. Maybe she wants to hide things from us and from the group. I know from my European friends that they do not like intimate and private emotions to be exposed. We don't find out if she is abused. But I am sure she did not want to expose her emotions. This is why she felt that we are 'pushy'.

As ordinary South Africans we are used to living with our emotions. We have to be emotional in order to live in our interracial, unequal society and with our vastly disadvantaged communities. Painful inequalities are around us all the time and having beggars at our street corners has to affect us emotionally. The other black and coloured women volunteers in the workshop are not afraid to deal with their emotions or accept that they are abused. They are all down to earth and they are open to the healing that takes place and know that we are there to help and support them. I used to say that if I ask a white woman about abuse she will change the subject. Coloured women will mostly shy away. But if I were to ask a black woman she will say "Please help me, I need it".

The A/A workshop goes extremely well with lots of excellent verbal and written feedback on the volunteers' evaluation forms.

They praise the workshop and say that it is emotionally moving, effective and valuable. When we first design these workshops we have no idea of their effectiveness or how quickly and successfully they can move women to behave, act and think very differently. In some ways it surprises us. Overnight the volunteers share their experiences with their friends and families. The following day they tell us that they have more requests from women for our workshops.

It is now the beginning of February 1999. I have only one month to finish the Counselling skills training course for volunteers and there is so much to do. I have to condense our original five weeks' Counselling Module into an eight day's course. I am overwhelmed at the prospect. I do not know how I shall find the time to complete it.

There are role-plays that I have to discuss and design with all the community workers and put together scenes to illustrate different stages of Counselling. All of this has to be completed before they begin work in the courts which open on the 2nd and the 3rd of March. The deadline has to be met in less than one month. We have to make sure that the volunteers are confident to do Crisis Counselling so that they can assist applicants with affidavits for Protection Orders. The next great hurdle for me is to write the Counselling skills training course.

Four days before we begin training I have only written the first two days of the eight day course. I am panicking. It is very difficult to get it right. There is much to read through and try to condense. It will take so long to get to the final layout. I still have six more days of material to design and develop. I am suffering because I have not completed the shortened curriculum or had the time to complete it. And they have to know the work off by heart.

The trainers come to my house nine times to practice for the first two days of the course. Some days I provide lunch and we carry on working for the whole day. When the trainers feel that they are almost practised in their role-plays we bring in all the other community workers in to critique them. They come to my house to act as their judges. They are quick to point out when the trainers are not authentic or don't make sense and they praise them when things work out well. They all enjoy participating and building these role-plays together.

Besides the role-plays, each time we think that the Counselling worksheets are completely set and sorted out, they change again. I cannot count the times we draft and redraft their worksheets. Every time we think the lessons will work effectively, we hit snags or we improve or change them around. It is extremely stressful.

We practice the first two days of the Counselling course again in Gugulethu. Teen also comes into Gugulethu one Saturday morning to be part of the test-run for us. We make significant changes as the community workers continue to give important feedback that is crucial for understanding the material. Once we start getting our 'act' together it becomes easier. There is quite a bit to do but we are beginning to see the light.

We choose some of the volunteers from the Abuse Assertiveness workshop who we think will succeed in working in the courts. They will also be trained in our Counselling Skills and Court Procedure courses. We choose as many Xhosa volunteers as possible who will be able to assist Xhosa-speaking applicants in the courts. The Xhosa applicants will speak to them in Xhosa and they will have to translate and fill in the Protection Order Forms and affidavits for them in English or Afrikaans.

The Court Procedure workshop will take a half a day's training. They will receive a copy of the Protection Order and will learn how to fill it in. They will learn how to write affidavits for their clients which is an important part of the Protection Order. Each court has their own way of filling in the affidavit. Some courts want them to start with the latest incidence of abuse and some courts want them to start with the earliest incidence of abuse. They will learn about filling them in properly as they get to court.

Our community workers continue to work with their abused clients in the courts before the Court Support Desks are set up. Now the court volunteers will free them so they can return to serving their abused clients in the community. We are all pleased that they will be able to refer their abused clients to well-trained Mosaic volunteers.

The volunteers look forward to learning the skills of Counselling. However, I am very far from ready with the six remaining day's training. There does not seem to be enough time to finish writing it.

I do not have any energy or mind-set to sort them out. I have to write at night when I come home exhausted and want to go to bed.

I am caught between a rock and a hard place.

Waves

Today is the end of February and there are only four days before the training begins. I am finding the material development to be a nightmare. I cannot work and I worry myself sick. The deadline is so close I can reach out and touch it. I am frightened, tense and totally incapacitated. I cannot think or act clearly. In this state of desperation I step out for a fast walk early on Sunday morning. I pace briskly along the beachfront. What I am really trying to do is to avoid sitting down at the computer and start writing. Panic consumes me. I feel as if I am stepping out of a plane into thin air with nothing to catch me.

My head is bent firmly forward and the sun warms my back. I silently watch my shoes stepping out before me. I am fixated on my shoes and their moving shadows. I am oblivious to everything around me. The shoes are dark shadows in front of me. I am dark shadows within me. Nothing can penetrate the dark and troubled pit of torment and panic that consumes me.

I walk for two hours. After one hour I still did not know how I am going to begin to write the material for the next six days. I am not thinking. My body moves but I am absorbed and immersed in the utter feeling of the dreadful aching hole inside of me. I turn and start walking back towards home. But now I begin to look up. I see the waves through two small portholes in my head. I view them with fascination. I watch them build and break. Some huge waves with lots of energy burst with power and some small and gentle waves build gently and break slowly. Some smash and crash and some just roll towards the rocks and play around them. I stare at the busy, incessant and restless waves. I become captivated by their energy and the patterns that form when they break against the rocks. I think that my life is like the waves. I cannot stop the continual momentum of my days just as the waves cannot stop the continual momentum of their breaking.

Then I think of how long the waves have been breaking and that they will continue breaking for Eternity. I see that as each wave

breaks and splashes around the rocks it seems that there is a childlike joy and amazing energy in breaking. They just continue again and again. Again and again and again. It is fun. Nothing holds them back. The bigger the surge and the splash, the more beautiful are the tiny little waterfalls that cascade and fall from the rocks. Now their beauty is spell binding. Waves do not 'worry and think'. They just 'do'. They surge, break and retreat to join the ocean again with such natural simplicity. If the waves have to think that they must break for Eternity would they break with such joy and abandon? Would they think 'Oh my God, we have to break for an Eternity.... How are we ever going to do this'?

I smile inwardly and silently and I say to myself that what I have to do is disinvest myself of this heavy and weighed-down feeling of fear and responsibility inside of me. I must just go home and break like a wave. No more thinking and worrying. My desperation is suddenly broken by these waves and I feel as happy and free as the waves. From my deep introspection I have learnt amazing lessons from nature and have emerged triumphant. Now I cannot wait to get home and work.

I sit at my computer and break like all the waves. I look at all the material that I have to put into the workshops. I look at the different methods that I have to use. I develop other role-plays. I design visuals and handouts from scratch. I work out when there are appropriate breaks for us to take for tea and lunch. I work out the order of the information-giving so that there is clarity of understanding. I have to pull jargon, concepts and processes apart and explain them clearly for the volunteers who will not know what they are or how to use them. I have to keep a careful balance between content and pace. Most of the women who will be trained are poorly educated but there are also women who are well educated. They will all be part of the same group.

I finish the next two worksheets and manage to rough out the third day's lesson plans working from 10am to midnight without a break. The relief is tremendous and there is a deep feeling of achievement. I am tired but euphoric as I close down the computer and fall into bed.

When we begin training I know that my Guiding Angels are giving me some kind of reassurance and I realise that they are with me. The volunteers start the second part of their training with the Counselling course. On the Thursday morning while we are doing a counselling exercise. I need the volunteers to change and practice with other partners. I want certain of my trainers to sit with the weaker volunteers of whom I am not sure but I do not know how to do this without pointing fingers at certain people. I make the volunteers walk around the room. When I ask them to stop, I am astonished. Every volunteer is standing next to the exact trainer with whom I want them to work. What are the odds on this? I even want Dawn to remain without a partner and she does. I go all goosy. I turn to Dawn and tell her what has happened. When spirit enters the group and things happen as if through serendipity, it is very exciting.

It is through sharing their own experiences that they are learning how to counsel. While we work with them we realise that we are moving into dangerous emotional territory opening up deep issues in their personal lives. A number of volunteers break down and have to be helped by our trainers. We know that their breakdowns are important for their self-growth and healing. It does not scare us but encourages us as they open themselves up to painful issues that they can work through and resolve.

There are no postponements in the training because we are opening the Court Desks on Monday. No short cuts can happen. They need all their information before they can be on court duty. No rushed exercises can be conducted because we work with their own personal issues as we teach them how to counsel.

I continue breaking like a wave and I trust in my incredible God and Angels to see me through. I know deep down that I shall be fine from now on. This week is the real crunch. The net result is that we run the two volunteer workshop from 9am to 4pm each day. My trainers and I are drained and exhausted; for the volunteers it is also difficult.

When I return home again I sit at the computer until midnight and work out the worksheet for the training the next morning. At 6am I wake up, get all the handouts photocopied and everything packed together for another day of the workshop. Later in the

afternoon there is more writing to do. There is no choice. I repeat the process again for the following days and for the final day of training. Just meeting the deadlines each time. Hallelujah. What an absolute relief.

Fortunately my trainers now have a fair share of practicing the workshops. It is a catch and deliver training process for them each morning. They catch the workshops hot off the press and they train the trainees who have no idea of what happens behind the scenes. We are true survivors. The training of Counselling skills is complete and the women are trained to work in the courts. We have got through it all by the skin of our teeth. Thank you God. They are now Mosaic court workers and we are grateful for their volunteer work with abused applicants in court.

I learn unbelievable lessons from this training course, lessons that I would never learn in any other way. I learn about the total handing over of self and the opening of myself as a channel for information to come through. I learn that my darkest moods can be changed immediately with what happens en route and in my mind. I learn how to beg for help. I witness miracles in the form of whole workshops that materialise in hours and exercises that I thought would be Okay but eventually turn out to be profound.

Journal March 1999

"Yesterday I emailed Ann about the waves and what happened to me with the worksheets. Today she emailed me with her reply. She wrote that she will keep the image of the waves with her and she will remember to live in the moment for the joy of the present. But she reminds me "to please remember another thing about waves. They are content with wearing down the rocks a micron at a time. They do not expect to do it all in one day". I am amused when I read this. My typical practical sister

She said that she is not sure about her belief system but she is sure about a few things and she explains one of them. She said that she is sure that I am doing exactly what I am meant to be doing. There is no other explanation that she can think of that would explain how, not why, I stay afloat and keep making progress and how I achieve all that I do.

She said that the 'why' is easy or at least easier to explain but it is the 'how' that astounds her. She looks at me and the gifts that I have and the gifts that I

give and she marvels at my inner strength. She finishes off by saying that she is not sure what sustains me and nourishes me and gives me the energy but if it is my Guardian Angels and my God, then she is eternally grateful to them.

She said that having developed training courses over the years she knows what it takes to put a day of training together. Her experience has been mainly, though not exclusively, on pretty factual topics and they have been hard enough. She knows the feeling when she will do anything to escape doing something because just the thought of doing it makes her crazy. She said that she will clean the toilet sometimes rather than write a paper that she just doesn't want to tackle! Like me, when it really comes down to it, there is no-one else to do the job and the job has to be done.

Others are counting on me. They need what I do so I just do it. It is wonderful to know that when I can't do it on my own I have my Guiding Lights there to help me. I mentally thank her for understanding!

There is just one worry that she wrote about. She said that last year I arrived in Canada looking dreadful and actually used the word sh--! She was concerned that I have not learnt to say 'no' and mean it. Her friend used to say, "If you take on the whole world where are you going to put it"? She says that I am no use to anyone if I am too tired or too sick to work.

She requested me to "please give myself more time, plan better, delegate more, take on less or pace myself better". Then she said that her friends would collapse laughing if they knew she was writing this but she just thinks that it means that she knows what she is talking about!"

I truly appreciate Ann's email. It comes at the right time for me. I also know what she is talking about. Ann works herself to the bone in her own management business always busy and taking on new assignments where she should perhaps take advice from her own words. Ha!

The Court Desks

During 1999 the Domestic Violence Act of 1998 comes into operation. The differences in the Act change the categories of applicants that can now apply for the Protection Order previously called an Interdict. This will result in an increase of applications and a greater workload for the Clerks of the court.

The Mitchells Plain Court has recommended Mosaic's services to the Magistrates of the courts in Goodwood and Wynberg. It is such an honour that the Mitchells Plain Court recognises the work we do, realises that we are making a difference and recommends our services.

We are all excited in anticipation of moving into these two 'new' courts and helping applicants for their Protection Orders. There is confusion and much to sort out. Besides the court workers still working in Mitchells Plain court, it is tricky to set up our new court workers in the short time that we have between openings in the two new courts. We shall have to split them into two groups to work in these courts and will probably change them from court to court as we continue running our services.

It is the 1st of March. Our volunteers are trained and rearing to start and the courts are finally about to open our Court Support Desks. Our supervisors are keen to go into the courts to help our volunteers. Tomorrow we start in the Goodwood Court and in two weeks' time in the Wynberg Court.

Goodwood is a small court with not much space for our volunteers to help their applicants. They need a private space to work in but the Magistrate can only put us at the bottom of the stairs which is windy and not very pleasant. They apologise and we can see that there is nowhere else to accommodate us. Our table will be under the stairs in the corridor outside the Clerk's office where the other applicants sit and wait for service.

On Thursday we visit the Wynberg Court with some volunteers. We meet with the Clerk of the court and the Magistrate who are

falling over backwards to accommodate us and cannot wait for us to begin working there. We are fortunate because the Wynberg Court gives us a big room of our own to work in with three tables. Three of our Court Workers can help three abused applicants at the same time. It is a fairly confidential work place and the women who wait for Mosaic's services cannot hear the applicants sharing their stories.

We all pray that this project is so successful that we make a significant difference in the lives of the abused women. I also pray that other courts will be keen to have us join them. We also know that we shall be a strong support system for the Clerks who are overworked by the large numbers of women coming into court.

Since the establishment of our Court Support Desks, Leonorah still works in the Mitchells Plain Court with her clients. She helps other Xhosa women with the Protection Orders and affidavits. She will continue working there on certain days of the week. On other days she will supervise the Goodwood and Wynberg court workers. She has been training Judy in Mitchells Plain and they are both ready and rearing to supervise the women in the new Court Support Desk programme.

In the beginning Leonorah and Judy will help them to fill in the client's forms and affidavits. They will supervise them in counselling the applicants. There may be times, as happens with the Mitchells Plain Magistrate, when they are given permission to accompany their applicants into court for their hearings.

We work out our court worker's register. There are now experienced court workers who work in Mitchells Plain but Leonorah will still supervise them to see if they need help with their applicants. She will supervise Judy and the volunteers who work in Goodwood on Mondays and Tuesdays. On Wednesdays and Thursdays the court workers will work in Wynberg. On Fridays Judy and Leonorah will come into class with our community workers and give us their feedback.

We have to take into consideration that it will take considerable time for her to travel by taxi from Mitchells Plain to Goodwood and Wynberg to supervise the three different courts in which the court workers are situated.

Right from the beginning I want us to record our court statistics and design Mosaic Court Forms. Once applicants receive our services we ask them to write their names and short comments on our Mosaic Court Forms stating how the services have helped them. These forms will keep track of our court statistics and give us feedback on how the applicants are helped. In this way we have data to show funders and any additional courts who may want our services. Feedback is important to help our court workers gain self-confidence and receive more incentives to carry on with the programme.

The Xhosa applicants are especially grateful for our services. But other women are also grateful. Sometimes there are English and Afrikaans applicants who need help with the Protection Order Form and with their affidavits. Abused women who come to court are confused and disorientated no matter what language they speak. Some are so desperate and disempowered that they need counselling as well. Mosaic's women know that as far as possible they have to use their applicant's mother tongue so that their stories are correct in their affidavits. Affidavits that are not correctly completed are rejected by the Clerks. Fortunately we have Xhosa, English and Afrikaans speaking volunteers who can help them fill their affidavits in correctly. At the Goodwood Court there are definitely more Afrikaans-speaking applicants, in Wynberg there are more English and Afrikaans-speaking applicants but we also place a Xhosa speaking volunteer there as well.

In class on Fridays the community workers and I realise that our court programme is one of Mosaic's most exciting growth points. In the first three weeks at those three courts two hundred and forty four applicants have been helped by the court workers. This all happens so quickly that we are taken aback with the results. We manage to get start-up funding for this project and this is outstanding.

Now we are rolling from one court to another. The Magistrate in the Bellville Court calls me to set up a meeting. She asks us to consider serving in their court as well. In February we make arrangements for Mosaic to open another Court Support Desk at the request of the Paarl Magistrate. We are so excited.

We reach a stage when we have so many Mosaic Forms filled out by applicants after receiving our help. The court workers are eager to

share them with us. They read some of the many Xhosa comments in class taken from their Mosaic Court Report Forms:

- *Uncedo endilufumeneyo lundenze ndanethemba lokuba yonke into iyakulunga. (The help I received here gave me hope that everything is going to go right)*
- *Ndancedakele kakhulu ekudibaneni kwam naye nditsbo ndazuzuka lukhulu ebomini ndiyathembisa ndakuqhubekeka nobomi obungcono. (I was very lucky to meet her because I received more knowledge of life and I am hoping that I shall be able to carry on with a better life)*
- *Undibuze imibuzo efanelekileyo wandinceda ngako konke undinceda kakuhle Enkosi. (I was helped very well because she asked me good questions. Thank you)*
- *Ndiziva ndibona isisombululo nemphatho ntle evakalayo. (I feel that there will be a solution and a better life for me.)*

Some comments from Goodwood and Wynberg include:

- *I was afraid to take a stand in court on Monday but now I feel much better and I can do it. I want to thank you for the difference that you made in my life. May God bless you.*
- *Ek voel sterker en ek voel dat ek my lewe kan begin met my kinders sonder my man nou. Dankie vir die help. (I feel stronger and I feel that my life can begin with my children and without my husband now. Thank you for the help.)*

During the go-around in the court workers' supervision we tell them that these comments are wonderful. Service is the greatest gift of all and I am grateful that they all appreciate working and serving abused women. However, during class we work through any of their concerns that they have. They learn considerably from each other. Some have men applicants who apply for Protection Orders against their women partners and the volunteers are confused as to what they should do. Should they help them with the application or not? Some of the court workers have women applicants who apply and subsequently their abusers come to court for a counter application for the Protection Orders against them. Some Warrants of Arrest are

not served and applicants are terrified of their partners. Do we have anywhere we can refer them to?

They also share how differently the courts work. The differences are important for each other to learn from and also for the sustainability of the court procedures. The Clerks in some courts will award the applicants Interim Protection Orders and Interim Warrants of Arrest while others will not do so although by rights they should. If they do not provide these Interim Orders the women can be further abused. Interim Orders and Interim Warrants protect the women as they can have recourse to the police and their abusers with them before they are finally allowed to come to court to have their Protection Orders granted.

The court workers' concerns are endless. The police are lazy and appalling and do not know about Protection Orders. They allow the application forms to lie on their desks and do not serve them. The Sheriffs can serve the Warrants of Arrest to male abusers but they are too expensive for most applicants. The police will arrive at the applicant's house when she calls for them and her abuser will say that everything is just fine and the police will leave. Sometimes Leonorah and I have to speak to the Clerks or Magistrates to get official help for their applicants.

When our court workers hand their applicants' Comment Forms in to us we find that every comment is positive. Some applicants just say 'thank you' and that is enough for them. 'Thank you' is still a source of encouragement. We are proud of the work that they do and their supervisors are equally proud of them.

Linked to the Court Support Desk programme, the Clerks ask us to run monthly Clerk debriefing sessions for them. They need to be able to share their experiences with other Clerks from the different courts. I realise that they experience so much stress and are daily pressurised into helping many abused applicants, filling in endless forms and getting the Protection Orders to the Magistrates. Unfortunately stress goes with this job. I need to assist them to know that they are not the only Clerks who have these problems. They can share their concerns freely. Debriefing truly helps them to unwind.

After one year's service in the courts we are very excited to see that we reach and support a total of four thousand and eighty two

applicants. The programme is a resounding success. And to celebrate these achievements we decide to have a successful press launch in the Wynberg Court. The community newspapers send journalists to the launch and we are happy to see them. They put out a press release to inform the public of our services. Advocate Hishaam Mohammed, Regional Head of the Department of Justice, attends the event and speaks of the project admirably. Mr van Reenen the Magistrate of the Wynberg Court and the Cape Town Mayor Nomaindia Mfeketo also speak about our excellent volunteers and the court programme. Mr van Reenen shares that this project is easily replicable and says that it improves the image of the courts. I am excited as my father attends the launch and as I look at him I can see how proud he is of Mosaic and of what we have accomplished.

Soon after this event we are asked to open our Mosaic Court Support Desk in Cape Town's Court as well as at four other courts who want our services. Now we cannot stop the courts from asking us to open our Support Desks and we cannot refuse. It is happening too quickly and too overwhelmingly. Our number of court workers are not sufficient and we have to train more of them to serve. Dawn and the trainers are happy to do more training and the recruitment for more volunteers begins.

We are very busy but we still have minimal funding. Fortunately the court workers are able to work for no remuneration but I am sure this will change soon. I pray for funding so that we can give them what they deserve. Unfortunately however, the Justice Department does not fund this project. Hopefully they will see the enormous benefits and finally begin to support us. All we need is funding to support our court project.

I think that I am the only one to be truly amazed by our amazing court project. For the community workers and court workers it is just another one of our services. They do not realise how this project will affect so many abused women's lives and how 'Big' it will be for Mosaic. These are journeys within a journey for all of us.

Once again we lead the field. Firstly with education about abuse and domestic violence for patients in the hospitals and clinics, and now with the Court Support Desk Project. I am proud that we can initiate and promote these innovative and increasingly important

services for abused women in our community. In 1999 there are no NGOs delivering these services in Cape Town and probably nowhere else in South Africa. I am very proud of Mosaic and of all our staff and volunteers.



The court workers

New Century and Thriving

It is the year 2000. A new dawn is breaking for us at Mosaic. We have survived into the twenty first century and are now moving into a new creative beginning. Hopefully the year 2000 will be a good one for us. At the beginning of each year I pray for this. But each year becomes more difficult. Please God make the year 2000 successful for Mosaic.

We have had five years of difficult growth and development. The original Mosaic of 1995 with ten inexperienced trainees seems so far behind us now. Our community workers are well trained and they are growing daily in experience and expertise. They are making their mark in the different communities in which they work and Mosaic is becoming a well-known organisation. We have well trained court volunteers. Every day we change people's lives. We have so much to be proud of.

In class we pray to God to please send us more funding and a centre for Mosaic. Our community workers say that people ask them how they can have an office in Sea Point yet work in the black community. They talk about other NGOs that have offices. I tell them that it also worries me. I desperately wish for a centre where we can put Mosaic's name on our front door, show our face to the community and abused women can enter and be healed.

Working at my home in Sea Point, in Gugulethu and in our different community venues is disorienting for all of us. When we have our centre we can consolidate our offices and meeting places. We can invite funders and visitors into Mosaic and be proud that we are now an established organisation with a centre of our own. We can only pray for a funder.

This year our community workers and court workers discuss the need to train a second group of court volunteers. Our court workers are overworked because we are now working in six Magistrate's courts. This year more than 15,000 abused and traumatised applicants

are helped with Protection Orders. Although we are thriving, we realise that we have to have more people to do duties in the courts.

When we meet with our court workers we share that they, who have worked with Mosaic for one year, will finally be engaged as Independent Court Contractors and receive a minimal amount for their work. They are excited. I am pleased to tell them that when more funding comes in we shall be able to increase their wages.

Another training programme begins and we train sixteen additional volunteers to be the second group of court workers. These women will join our twenty three established Court Contractors. The second group will thankfully still work voluntarily in the courts so we can expand our services with little cost.

During the first six months of 2000 we are all delighted because our name has been put forward for certain awards. Our Court Support Desks receive wonderful recognition and our court workers are thrilled. One is the Idasa Impumelelo Innovations Award and the other is the second prize in the Advocacy Category of Excellence of Sangoco's Katlego's NGO award. How amazing that our little Mosaic can achieve these awards. It is our greatest pleasure and we are humbled but delighted with the awards. The staff want to frame the awards and hopefully place them in our own centre one day.

During 2000 a number of articles about us are published in magazines and newspapers. Three articles are published in the Cape Argus about the new Domestic Violence Act in which I am interviewed. They are entitled 'Abused women seeking refuge overwhelm the courts' and 'Cops are battling to help abused women and kids – Domestic Violence Act virtually impossible to enforce' and 'The plight of abused women.' Southern Mail publishes an article endorsing 'Court Support Desks a boon for abused women' and the Atlantic Sun publishes an article 'Award winning Mosaic helps women pick up the pieces.'

We are excited by the English and Afrikaans articles. These bring abused people into the courts where we can help them in the Mosaic Court Support Desks. Even our Permaculture project receives coverage in Sarie magazine and the Cape Environment magazine and Nomvuzo and Zoleka are thrilled each time a new article is published.

Our community workers and I are also interviewed on radio and on TV. The BBC Radio, Voice of the Cape Radio, Bush Radio and Radio CCFM and KC in Paarl and the SABC 2 Molo Show, a children's television programme interviews Nomvuzo and Zoleka about the Permaculture programme. It is all so exciting. The year 2000 is prospering beyond our wildest dreams.

When people read the articles I am also happy for my parents who are so proud of me and Mosaic and have stood by me through thick and thin and have funded me when Mosaic is desperate I am lucky to have parents who are good, kind, generous and compassionate. Their friends all ask them about Mosaic.

It is during this year that our funders begin to see us through financially. Marieta works hard to establish connections and bring funding into Mosaic. We always try to meet new funders for our services. It is so much easier this year and I am very relieved that Marieta is working with us. Funders include individuals, corporate funders, foundations, trusts and funds, the Government and other funding organisations. Grants are small and we are definitely not wealthy. With transport costs for our expanding staff members the responsibility is increased and every penny raised is quickly and responsibly spent.

Our Permaculture Project moves into a second successful year of operation. A wonderful spin off from this project is that Nomvuzo and Zoleka create support groups with the Permaculture members. When they first meet them they discuss their client's personal problems and then they discuss gardening skills. The members of the support groups proudly show our community workers their gardens.

Sally drives into Khayelitsha in her car and with our women moves from garden to garden. It is a successful project and it is nice to have my friend involved. They create a phrase for this project "We grow people and gardens".

In class Josephine tells us that she is pleased because for a second year our Mosaic's Youth Project will continue to meet in Paarl. There are now over a hundred pupils who dance, sing, create drama about abuse and receive education about abuse and how they can stop it from happening.

When I visit them in the Paarl Municipality Hall where they congregate I am deeply touched by these children who work with gusto and who support each other. Josephine tells us that many of the youth come from abused homes and she says that she has to counsel these children and work with those who are raped or are incest survivors. Most of the youth present with stress, fear, anger, low self-esteem and social relationship problems. I am fortunate to see the role-plays that they create are about abuse and rape. The role-plays are profound and I am moved to tears as the youth present their feelings and their anger.

In class our community workers listen to Josephine and they share their own experiences how they counsel and help their clients' children who are raped. They now use 'process commentary' and they are kind and careful with these children. They all know that children who are raped take a very long time to heal.

The community workers say that they cannot survive without our weekly meetings. For me it is a combined supervision and debriefing session, uniting them as support for each other. I also cannot do without our meetings. I learn and thrive from them every time we are together.

In class they share that there are men as well as women who come to them for help. Most of our community workers refer the men to other NGOs dealing with men's problems. But it is interesting that many more men are approaching us for help with their own abusive situations.

A discussion arises because I want to know how many of our community workers are comfortable to counsel men. They share that when men report to them they find out that the abuse is basically verbal or psychological abuse from their partners or ex-partners, and physical abuse from their sons. But they also reveal that they are not skilled enough to counsel abused men especially when they do not trust men. We all agree with the 'trust' issue and it brings some laughter to the group. We know that most men cannot be trusted but we know that some men are abused and can be trusted with their information. Our community workers' passion is to help and support abused women. However they say that when they gain enough experience they may very well counsel male clients in future. But not

yet. Some of the community workers say that they will counsel men when their abused clients ask them if their male partners can be included in the sessions following theirs. Then they will counsel both of them together. I want to know exactly the way that they are counselled. Couple Counselling is not easy.

Caroline tells us that she counsels a couple at the beginning of last week. She first counsels the woman and then the man. Then after she has the necessary information from both of them she counsels them together. She tells us that she deals with the situation by educating the man about abuse and carefully promoting the woman's point of view. She deals with both of their verbal and non-verbal attitudes and behaviour towards each other, but she especially looks at the man's attitude and behaviour. She says that her woman client comes to see her again this week to give her positive feedback. We congratulate her on couple counselling well done.

Our new volunteers need training and our training team of Dawn, Caroline and Mia are on a roll. They train them in Assertiveness and Abuse and then in Court procedure. They run the Counselling skills training for them. They tell us that these women should do very well in court. I am pleased to hear this.



Mosaic's Training Workshop in the community

Now that the training team is committed we also offer courses to abused community women in Assertiveness and Abuse. They are thrilled to have this training. They share some comments with us where the trainees talk about the value of the workshops. They read from their Comment Forms written at the end of their training sessions.

- *“Lots of women are not aware of abuse. Sometimes they keep quiet.... This workshop is empowering women to know what to do if they are abused. It is opening the eyes of women.”*

- *“I feel more confident after doing this workshop because I can solve things on my own without anger. I can be assertive because of this workshop. It has helped me a lot.”*

- *“I’ve learnt how to speak out and address the feelings that hurt, to still speak to somebody with the required respect.”*

- *“Keep it up Mosaic. All women must be aware and stand up for their rights. If you educate or make women aware, you educate a nation. I also thank you, you bring the light. I was in a dark place.”*

- *“I would really like this workshop for men. Men need to know about abuse so they can stop abusing us.”*

- *“I feel that I opened up my deepest hidden secrets about my mother. I never opened up to anyone before. This was totally a different workshop to all the others I had.”*

The comments are wonderful and we praise our trainers and they look equally delighted. All of our women love the work that we are doing. Being of service is a ‘give and give’ and especially when we know we help and inspire others to grow and change and we receive their grateful thanks in return.

They love the networking and the meetings with different associations that they do on a regular basis. They report to us when they attend workshops and events. They are excited to be asked to be guest speakers at different women’s organisations, youth meetings, community and religious organisations. These speaking events give them the chance to spread their skills and talk confidently about Mosaic and about stopping abuse.

I get such pleasure to spread Mosaic’s name around the community. I am an active member of NEWAVE, the Western

Cape's Network on Violence against Women. I am also on the Domestic Violence Act's Monitoring Committee where we keep a close look at the activities relating to the Act and the Implementation of the Act. Being on the Network gives Mosaic great contacts with other colleagues working in the field and we combine with them as a solid lobbying force to address important gender issues.

With all our busy activities and our growing members of staff, the year of 2000 buzzes and bursts along. Before we know it, it is August and we have to prepare for another AGM. We have to organise a venue and invite NGOs and visitors. We have to arrange for refreshments and the staff have to plan for their activities during the AGM. It is always a busy and exciting time for all of us.

Fortunately because of our Permaculture Project situated at the Tafelsig Primary School in Mitchells Plain, they are happy to have us conduct our AGM in our containers at the school. We are grateful to have a venue.

Journal Friday 30 August 2000

"Today was our AGM held in Tafelsig in Mitchells Plain. I have a kaleidoscope of memories tonight. What a stunning event and a real community function. Teen, Trev and mom were so happy that they were there at our AGM.

This morning I frantically went to pick up the Annual Reports 'literally' hot off the press. Then taking supervision with everyone and practicing their participation beforehand. Practicing their singing to start off the proceedings and lifting the energy with everyone singing 'Glory Hallelulab' all the way through. I see us happily preparing the refreshments and placing them on the tables. Oh! what a wonderful day.

The hall was beautifully prepared by the school. Our guest speaker Lynne spoke wonderfully about Mosaic and our small band of women who are making a difference. People from the school spoke about the needs of the community and how much we are helping. We had three funders come down from Johannesburg especially for the event! Amazing! The sponsors got lots of exposure and they deserved it. In my Director's report I thanked everyone for coming to support Mosaic. I spoke about the different services and projects that we have been running and I thanked our abused women for supporting us.

Funny little things happened with the community workers as they forgot to introduce the next speaker or forgot to give them their gifts. Everyone laughed and

it wasn't a great problem. It contributed to our unsophisticated community AGM. Zoleka was stunning as our MC. Mia prayed so beautifully. Nomvuzo so delicious you could eat her. All of them so wonderful. And then singing our Avulakile Amasonga 'the doors are open', until we were hoarse. I had so much energy to burn and our staff were on a roll.

Many different people were there. Our community workers, court workers and volunteers were there. Community people, police, magistrates, nursing sisters and Ikamva, NEWAVE and Rotary were there. Three of our board members also attended. Hugh so happy to be there saying how wonderful that we always start on time! Marieta taking pictures and wonderful as always. The staff so helpful and putting our banners up.

There was a perfect, warm and happy atmosphere. It was a remarkable afternoon with staff, family and friends celebrating. God kept the weather fine as promised. And then it rained just as we left the school!

Another of our AGMs is over. So much preparation with the staff paid off and I really feel that a new life is going to begin for us. I've moved through a long seven years. Tonight I feel light. I feel space. I feel free and happy. It has been a magnificent end to a very busy month."

The year 2000 was, as I had hoped and prayed, an amazingly productive year. Marieta, Teen and I work well together and our commitment pays off. Marieta grows our funding base. Our Courts Support Desks fill with abused women applying for Protection Orders, our communities gain from our services as thousands of abused people are supported and healed by Mosaic. We are now all looking forward to a happy and productive 2001.

And so 2001 begins. I have great hopes for this year.

In the first class that our community workers and I have together, I discuss my thought about writing an information booklet for abused people coming into other Magistrate's courts where we do not have our Court Support Desks. We discuss how we all have knowledge about the courts and court processes that we learn from the applicants and the courts. Now we need to share this knowledge with other abused women. It must be written in a Question and Answer format, asking questions that applicants ask us and then writing down the answers that they need to know about.

In courts where Mosaic is not present, our booklet can give the applicants knowledge about the New Act and the categories of people who are now eligible to apply for Protection Orders. They can gain knowledge about the steps that they must take to apply for a Protection Order and what they need to get ready for the court hearing. They can learn what they must do when their children are abused? They can learn about making supplementary statements and how they can get their papers served on their abusers? In the booklet we can include answers about simple things, for example, how the same pen must be used for the entire application if it is to be accepted by the Clerk and the Magistrate.

During class supervision we talk about the booklet and how it can be used by service providers who have clients who have been abused and who want to know who can apply and how to apply for Protection Orders. We can mail them all around South Africa and service providers can order copies from us.

Now we have great visions for these booklets. Everyone is enthusiastic and they help me write and correct all the information that we need to include. I write everything down and take the information home with me. I put it onto my computer. When we think we are finished, we add more information. Slowly it comes together. Marianne is Mosaic's graphic designer, and we spend endless hours together getting this right. We plan the title of the booklet. It is *'It's An Order! A Simple Guide to your Rights!'*

I tell my sister Ann about the booklet and she says I must send her the content and she will edit it for me. She takes the Questions and Answers that we develop and places them for easy understanding.

I take the edited booklet *'It's An Order! A Simple Guide to your Rights!'* into class and we read the additions again. The staff and I feel a quiet thrill of happiness. The booklet is complete and ready to be printed when we can find a donor to print it. The Australian High Commission and Pharmacia generously offer to fund the printing of 1,500 copies of the booklet next year. We are relieved that our venture is complete. We know that it will be a great success and that Mosaic's name will be further promoted and spread. I thank God for the idea, for the ability of me and our community workers to put it

together and for finding sponsors for the booklet. It is another first for Mosaic. There is no other booklet like it.

On the 15th of October 2001 it is such a bitterly sad day of grieving and loss for me. Tonight my dad takes his last breath. My daddy, my rock, who supported me through all these years with my divorce and with Mosaic. My dad who was so generous and kind and gave me money for Mosaic when I really needed it. He was the one who believed in me and the creation of Mosaic from the beginning.

I take a week out of Mosaic for the funeral and for prayers. 2001 proceeds successfully and uneventfully until the end of the year. In December Martine gives birth to my first granddaughter Leanne Tzvia named after my dad's Hebrew name of Tzvi, a deer, so my dad lives on in another generation. We are all excited to have a new baby in Mosaic.

Over this year I become friendly with the journalists from the newspapers who interview us. I always let them know if we have news for them and they appreciate our connections and what we can offer to them. The word is out and Mosaic is at last becoming better known. The year continues with our activities all being conducted to the best of our abilities. People ask me about Mosaic and I am able to tell them that we are doing well. Now it seems that so many people associate me with Mosaic and want to know about our successes in the field.

I have to be careful not to associate with Mosaic too closely. I have to remember that Mosaic never was, never is and never will be mine. I cannot forget this. I have to keep on reminding myself but it is so difficult to separate myself from Mosaic, the services and especially from my women friends in Mosaic. I have brought everything into being, but Mosaic is Not Mine. My lessons cannot be taken away from me but Mosaic can.

All through the tough years my community workers and I manage to keep going. All through the almost bankrupt years we have stayed afloat. We have received awards and compliments. Our focus has been on the work that we are doing to help women to put their abused and broken lives together.

The years of 2000 and 2001 have been good years.

A Home of Our Own

It is 2002 and another year arrives. One day Marieta and I realise that we have to look for a piece of property for Mosaic. It is the most miserable, rainy, windy, very cold day. We have a meeting with the DG Murray Trust the following day and if we are going to ask them to fund property we have to have something to discuss and tell them about.

Martine thinks we are utterly crazy to go out today. In the office we look for estate agents' phone numbers. We speak to an agent and tell her that we need property for an organisation situated in Wynberg or close surrounds. She must think that we are absolutely nutty to look for property today. We arrange to meet in Wynberg.

I drive slowly there. It is pouring cats and dogs. It is a total cloud-burst. The heavens open and large sheets of rain are blown across the road. We find the agent's car. The rain is coming down so hard that when I try to open my window to talk to the agent I get soaking wet while she is trying desperately to shield herself from the driving rain. As I follow her, Marieta and I laugh hysterically. What a day to look for property.

We view three pieces of property and we decide that the last one in Ottery Road is the best. Three tenants live there but they know that they have to leave. A lot of alteration will be needed before we could move into the property. We arrive back at the office, sopping wet but very happy to tell Martine that our mission is accomplished. She still thinks that we are crazy.

At the meeting with the people from DG Murray Trust. Marieta and I are as 'up-beat' as possible. We tell them about the property and they agree to fund the property and the alterations to make it a viable Mosaic community centre. How miraculous and how phenomenal. At last we have a donor funded centre in the community. After all these years of working from my home and at Uluntu in Gugulethu we can move into our own property. The

thought has to sink in. Thank you DG Murray Trust for giving us a home of our own. Thank you God. The timing is amazing.

I cannot wait to tell my community workers in class. They literally jump for joy. A centre of our own? They hug each other and me and we sing and pray to God with great and enormous thanks for answering our prayers. All those years of praying and now God has answered our earnest and heart rendering prayers.



Our Mosaic logo is placed on our first home of our own

We discuss the benefits that we shall gain from our centre. We can put our name on our front door and have counselling rooms and offices and a place to meet. We can put up our posters and notices and not have to take them down. Our clients can be referred to our Mosaic Centre. There will be a rooms for our training, store rooms and a special space for our women's centre. All our dreams will be achieved. Oh my goodness we are so grateful. We draft a letter of thanks and appreciation to the DG Murray Trust to thank them for our wonderful gift.

Our architect Zack views the building and he draws up plans for the alterations. We visit the building as the alterations take place and I feel so at home. There is grey dust and rubble everywhere and builders are all around. This will be our stomping ground forever at Mosaic. Years of success and achievement will take place in our own home.

Nine months later the building is ready. But with this wonderful news I receive very unhappy news. Marieta tells me that she has accepted a position as a Director at another NGO in Stellenbosch. She is leaving Mosaic.

I know that Marieta is looking for another place to move to. She really is Director Material and she needs to spread her wings. She tells me that she will leave when she finds a person to become our financial manager to help with Mosaic's finances. She also says that she will only leave Mosaic when we move into our new building, and she will come onto the Board of Mosaic so she will still be connected to us. But I am very sad.

We advertise for a new Financial Manager to replace Marieta and we receive many faxes with people's CVs. We are in our office at my home when we receive a fax from a young male, Riaan Goosen. In his CV it states that he is Sportsman of the Year and is Captain of cricket and Captain of rugby. Heavens. He wants to work for a women's organisation that works with abuse and gender based violence? I tell our community workers and they also think it is hilarious. He would be the only male working with sixty females. He must be very brave.

The one thing that strikes me is that he now works for the Centre for the Blind in Worcester. I joke with Teen and Marieta and say that he must have a 'feeling' side to him. However, as ridiculous as it sounds to us, from the other CVs he seems to be the most suitable person for the job. Even though he is male.

I visit my friend in McGregor and I have to travel through Worcester. I make an arrangement to meet Riaan. When I reach the destination I see this most gorgeous tall young man with blond hair, a black T-shirt and jeans standing on the pavement waiting for me. Is this Riaan Goosen who CV'd us with his application? Good grief. He looks like a sport star and not a Financial Manager.

We talk and he tells me that he wants to find a job in Cape Town to live closer to his girlfriend. I tell him about the work that we do and he seems keen to join Mosaic. I tell him that he will have to come into town and meet with Marieta who does our finances.

The doorbell rings and I open the door. There I see a young man who is totally dressed in grey. He is not the dashing young man from Worcester. He has a grey shirt, a grey tie, grey trousers and grey shoes and a grey face. Riaan has come for his interview. He is scared and his face shows it. I greet him warmly and take him into the office where Marieta waits for him.

While Marieta interviews him I am busy at my computer with an ear out to hear how he copes. It seems to me that he manages to understand what Marieta tells him. She lets him know that she will get back to him. Once Riaan leaves the office Marieta says that he should be suitable although there is a lot that he still does not know. She will be there for him on the phone if he needs help so both he and Mosaic will not suffer. We call Riaan and tell him that we shall employ him. He is so grateful and cannot wait to come to town.



Riaan, me and Marieta celebrating Riaan's employment at Mosaic

The time for us to move to Wynberg happens quickly. On the day that the movers arrive everyone is there at the centre. Our

community workers, my mom, Marieta, Teen and me. We all help to move furniture and computers inside the building.

Marieta chooses her office and she is worried because the dust is still everywhere. She wraps her computer in a towel and I have a quiet laugh. I think that it is great that she is here when we move in to this home of our own but sad that she will not be in her office for long.

When the movers depart, our community workers, my mom, Marieta, Teen and I each light candles and with prayers and hymns we walk from room to room and bless our building. Lulu takes the lead singing loudly and the community workers add their voices to hers. We follow Lulu in a line. In our hearts we meditate asking God to please look after us and Mosaic and help us to inject love, support and laughter into our building. Let it be a place of safety and peace for us while we help abused women to heal and put the broken pieces of their lives together. We are all emotional. It is a most wonderful way to enter our new home with God as our Protector.

The following day it is amazing for me to travel to Wynberg and not work from my home. I make myself comfortable in my new office. I place my desk facing the open door so everyone knows that I have an open office for them all. I can also see who comes and goes. It is such luxury.

It is incredible when I drive into my garage because it looks so empty. My garage is clear of all the stacked and taped boxes full of forms from our social services and the courts' records. I open the front door and my home is empty. At last my house is now my home for my beautiful cats and me. It is no longer a Mosaic office. I have never had my house as my home so I can understand how peculiar I feel.

When I enter the old office downstairs I can still feel Marieta's and Teen's presence. It is weird. Now the guest bathroom is empty and cleared of black bags of clothing. When we collected clothes for our staff's clients from people who knew about us and from family and friends, they were kept in my guest bathroom because of a lack of space to store them in. Today they are placed in our storerooms at the office and our staff can distribute them to their needy clients. Now people can deliver their old clothes to our new office in Ottery Road and my bathroom and storeroom can be used for my guests

and for my own storage. The guest room is no longer an office and can now accommodate my guests. Life is changing quickly for me. But thank goodness Mosaic is on the up-and-up and my life is beginning to settle down.

Now our Board meetings and community work sessions can be held at our office. Now I can sleep late and no one can disturb me. When I come home from 'work' I can take a walk on the beachfront like any person and not feel guilty that I am not in the office. I can leave the office in Wynberg and focus on myself and my freedom at last.

There are many advantages in moving to Wynberg. It is a major turning point for me and for this amazing organisation and for all of us who work in Mosaic. We are no longer a floating population in all the communities but are grounded in our head office. What a tremendous relief it is. The DG Murray Trust has blessed us all and no one is more grateful than me. Mosaic can now stand on its own and in its own building. And people will know where to find us.

In 2002 we have 1,500 copies of our first edition of the Protection Booklet printed. We decide that the booklet must be translated into Afrikaans and Xhosa. However we don't have money to publish this yet. But our community workers translate it painstakingly into Xhosa and we wait for a donor to publish it. I do not understand Xhosa so it takes a long time to put it onto the computer. The Afrikaans translation is easier but it is still a mission. However, now we have the translations ready for donors so we can publish them when funding comes in.

A major highlight for all of us is when we launch our Protection Order booklet *'It's an Order! A Simple Guide to your Rights'*. Cheryl Gillwald our Deputy Minister of Justice honours us as Guest Speaker. We are privileged that she agrees to come to launch our booklet.

We hold the event at the University of Cape Town, the place where my idea to create a centre like Mosaic took place all those years ago. I have done what I said I would do in 1992 despite my lecturer's taunts during the UCT seminar ten years ago. I am now visiting my alma mater again as the successful Executive Director of the Mosaic, Training, Service and Healing Centre for Women. I wonder what my lecturer would think about of all this now.

Cheryl speaks about the importance of the booklet for abused women who apply for Protection Orders in the courts. She hopes that we can translate it into other languages and especially into Xhosa. She does not know that we are in the process of translating it already. After the ceremony we thank her for being with us and our thanks are sincerely meant. She truly adds stature to our launch.

We invite Cheryl to visit us at Mosaic and she says that she looks forward to seeing the centre. When she arrives I show her around. When we enter the storeroom she says that what impresses her most is our vast number of forms and statistics stored from the inception of Mosaic. She has not seen so many statistical forms placed in the boxes with the years written onto them.

When I say goodbye to her at her car, she tells me that she is truly impressed with Mosaic. How amazing for the Deputy Minister of Justice to be impressed with us. I cannot wait to tell our staff and our Board.

New Additions

When Marieta leaves Mosaic she leaves a huge gaping hole for me. It is difficult for me not to have her in the office. She is someone with whom I can talk about funding, new projects, upcoming launches and events. I have to work on my own and I miss her. We talk on the phone when I really need her advice and it is great to connect again.

Fortunately Riaan fills the gap as our new Finance Manager. All of our Mosaic women enjoy having Riaan at Mosaic and he quickly endears himself to us. He takes on the role of Human Resource Manager and handles all of the payments made to the staff. I can confidently turn to him to look after our budgets for all of the funding proposals that I write and he completes. We are working well together. We have more expenses and our running costs increase. Now we have to pay for electricity and water, rates and taxes. But with the wonderful support from our donors we also managed to double our income in 2002.

The great work that we did last year with fundraising is the cornerstone on which we build this year's funding and it is easier to expand. There is an increase in the amounts of funding coming into Mosaic. I thank Marieta for her hard work in fundraising. And I thank God as my nerve-wracking fears of bankruptcy are a burden of the past.

We have our Annual General Meeting for 2002 in the car park at the back of our Mosaic building. We erect a large tent and put in a speaker system and there is enough space for everyone to sit. We ask Patricia de Lille to be our guest speaker and she delivers an amazing address. After the meeting is concluded we all sing and dance and congregate around the front doorway with its red ribbon tied in a bow. Patricia cuts the ribbon and our Mosaic Centre is officially opened.



Sheilla and the court workers outside our Purple Container in Phillipi

Safmarine gives us funding to buy containers to use as Outreach Centres. We are so excited to have them. These are containers previously used on container ships and which are reconditioned into two counselling rooms with an entrance space for clients to wait for counselling between the rooms. We paint them purple our Mosaic colour, so that clients can identify with Mosaic when they see them, and identify them as Mosaic healing centres that they can come to for help.

Our beautiful Purple Outreach Containers are opened at the Phillipi Court, in Tafelsig, at Mitchells Plain's hospital and at Khayelitsha Hospital. I am proud of our Outreach Centres and proud to see that our Board members also attend the opening ceremonies for each one of them. Everyone is in high spirits with singing and

dancing to open these venues. They are placed in our busiest communities for us to counsel clients in privacy.

Another milestone is that our community workers register for a year's training for their Social Auxiliary Work qualifications. Every Saturday they attend classes during the year and take on added responsibilities over and above the work done in the community with their clients. On Fridays I ask them how they manage. Because of the 'social work' skills learnt from me and the work that they conduct for Mosaic, they say it is not so difficult.



Social Auxiliary Workers graduation

Back row: Me, Lungiswa, Leonorah, Mia, Caroline, Hilda, Lulu, Sheilla, Primrose.

Front row: Jean, Zoleka, Noxolo, Nomvuzo, Dawn

Unfortunately for Mosaic they have to do block field-work placements. They are placed with other organisations for a total of twenty six weeks. It is very disruptive to cover for each other and spread themselves out in the community. And they also have to write exams. Everyone is very grateful when they finally graduate. I feel privileged to see them receive their Social Auxiliary Work certificates and to be together with them. They look so excited and elegant in their black gowns. We take pictures of them for the future.

Now Mosaic has two Social Workers and thirteen Social Auxiliary Workers. Not many NGOs can claim this for themselves. We are qualified to take on the world.

At the end of 2002 Pam Foster from the World Population Foundation based in Holland, comes to visit us in our Head Offices and I am thrilled. Pam is a great friend of ours and Riaan and I have not seen her since last year. We sit with her in my office and I jokingly tell her that we want one million rand from WPF and her. A million rand is an enormous amount of money and we all laugh.

Then Riaan and Pam move into his office to talk about funding from WPF for this year. I stay in my office and I get on with the work that I am busy completing. After some time they come back into my office. We talk about what they have been discussing. Riaan gives me a strange look and then Pam tells me that she is giving us one million rand to build a hall and offices upstairs and to open our Women's Wellness Centre. My mouth hangs open and a million shivers run through me. It is unbelievable. I get up and hug Pam and thank her a zillion times for this gift.

What will our community workers and court workers think about WPF giving us a million rand for our building? We shall be able to build our hall and a lift for disabled clients to access our hall, have another kitchen upstairs and several offices. We shall double our building size. We shall help our women in our Wellness Clinic with TOPs, termination of pregnancies, so that they do not have to have illegal abortions. Our services will be given free at Mosaic. Thank you Pam for believing and supporting us in this way.

In April 2003 the building alterations begin and we vacate the office so that they can build the upstairs premises. We attend site meetings and I take pictures of the transformation of Mosaic. The pictures give us a living account of our 'herstory'.

Our faith, patience and courage are put to the test. We have to be well prepared during the many months of alterations. But we know that the rewards will eventually be gained and we cannot wait to be resettled again.

During this time we relocate back to my home. Our staff work in their communities and at our Purple Outreach Centres. On Fridays they all congregate at my home for our weekly meetings. Amazingly

we maintain a sense of stability in all of this chaos. Riaan works from his home and regularly comes to check work and find out what has to be done.

For eight months at home we co-ordinate our work and plan for the next week's programmes. Our statistics improve and all of our Forms are returned to me on a weekly basis. Despite the upheaval caused by the move to my house we still manage to reach over 100,000 people through our services and projects.

We are ecstatic to bear witness to the completion of our beautiful building and we move back again in November 2003. Our Mosaic signs and logos are painted and put up onto the outside walls and in the reception of our double-storied building. We are well and truly home again. It is a significant event in the life of all of us at Mosaic.



Our new building

The day before our official launch we arrange a celebratory party and pay tribute to our funders and supporters. It is the greatest highlight of our year. Pam Foster is back with us and is our guest speaker. She is happy to see what we have created. And it is wonderful for her to see what WPF's million rand has accomplished for Mosaic. She is a true and valued supporter and friend of ours and

we delight in our friendship. We are eternally grateful because without WPF and Pam our dream would never have come true.

How stunning it is for us to be able to have our AGM in our new hall which can easily accommodate one hundred people. And we shall no longer have to hunt for another venue for our AGM. Our hall will serve us countless times by holding our events and meetings in our future.

One of my most enjoyable activities is always to compile the Annual Report. It is a legality to have an Annual Report at our AGMs. I gain such pleasure in sharing with everyone about our exciting growth and developments that take place over the year.

In our Annual Report of 2002 /2003 we include statistics from each of our services, our pictures and reports from our Social Auxiliary Workers. We also briefly include some of our clients' success stories. Often the positive changes that take place in clients' lives are so remarkable that their counsellors hardly recognise them from one session to the next. We believe that their client's stories will be appreciated by people attending our AGM.

Hilda reports that her client that she counsels, is abused in all ways by her boyfriend. *"The day that Nondwe came to me for counselling she was smelling very badly. She couldn't even wash her baby who was also smelling and full of mucus. I asked God to help me while I counselled her especially as the smell was so bad and I didn't want to judge her. I counselled her in terms of her feelings, thoughts and experiences of what had happened to her. By the time she left me I could see a light in her eyes that wasn't there before. She came back to me the next week and I could hardly recognise her at first. There was such a big difference and she was like a new person. She was dressed nicely, her hair was neat and her baby was clean. Even her body looked different. What seemed to help her the most was that I cared about her, supported and believed in her. She has hope again."*

Noxolo also reports about her client Pat. *"Recently I got a client called Pat who is HIV positive. She was in a very bad state. When she first came to me she found it difficult to talk. I was the first person she came to after she get the results. I counselled her in terms of the virus by asking her questions. She realised that HIV is a virus and that she can still live for a long time. I referred her to the Mosaic support group at the clinic and I said she could come back to me whenever she wanted to. She did come back to me and now she is ok to talk about*

her condition. She believes that she can accept what she cannot change and that she will stay alive for many years. After we prayed she had the strength to tell her family.”

Lulu’s abused client has Lulu’s help to deal with her abuse. *“My client is Lungiswa. She came to me for help because her husband was beating her badly and because of the beatings she landed up taking drugs. The beatings got worse. When I first met her she was full of anger, having low self-esteem. She came to me for a Protection Order but I counselled her in terms of her feelings about the abuse and about the drugs. She came for three sessions and she talked and cried a lot. The last session that she came to I could see that she was different. That was when I told her about the Abuse Assertiveness training that we do at Mosaic. Lungiswa organised women in her area and we did a workshop for them for two days. She learnt so much that she became strong. Today Lungiswa has stopped taking drugs, she has confidence and she can handle her husband. She was so grateful that she thanked me because she said that she could not have done this without me if I had not counselled her. Now her husband sees her as confident. She phoned me one day to tell me that her husband apologised to her and said that he will never beat her again.”*

Leonora reports about Miriam her client and how her life changes. *“Miriam was married for 15 years and has two children. She was a nurse by profession but now she is unemployed. Her husband is a drug addict and an alcoholic. She has no support from him and she doesn’t trust him in any way. For a long time he has been beating her, swearing at her and he sexually abused her in front of her daughter who is six years old. Miriam was very scared of him because even if she went to her family he would go there and threaten her mother who stays on her own since her father passed away. Her mother didn’t have an option except to tell her to return to her husband. She was in psychiatric hospitals and went to different NGOs for counselling. But nothing changed. I met Miriam in court and I helped her with a Protection Order application. I explained the procedure of the Order and she was very scared because she had to appear in court with her husband. I supported her and asked the Clerk if I could appear in court with her. The Magistrate allowed me to be with her and she won the case. Then she wanted to be safe and away from him so I phoned the shelter and she stayed there for three months. During the time that she was in the shelter she came to me for counselling. Once this man was arrested for breaching the Protection Order and he spent six months in jail. Today Miriam is a nurse again. She got divorced*

and I helped her by referring her to the divorce court in Cape Town. She still comes to me for counselling.”

Each of our Social Auxiliary Workers’ reports are slotted into our latest Annual Report. Members who read the Annual Report are proud of the way that they counsel and change their client’s lives for the better. They honestly put the broken pieces of their client’s lives together to make their lives better.

Another challenge this year is the Performance Related Assessments that we conduct with all of our staff members. Thirty one of our court workers reach a high standard of work performance and we are proud to employ them as temporary members of our court staff. Our staff numbers are increasing as we train new court workers and Mosaic is growing quickly. In the past three and a half years we increase our Court Support Desks from three to eleven Magistrates’ courts.

I run our court workers’ supervision twice a month and they are also supervised each week in the courts. They listen carefully to each other and they answer my questions. I respect their dedication and professional expertise and we have an extended mutual admiration society. Thank you God for bringing this project into being.

At our last Board of Directors meeting I have a difference of opinion with the Board. They want me to apply for the Cape Times / V&A Waterfront’s Women of Worth competition. I decline it as I do any applications offered in different competitions. The Board tell me it is not about me, it is about Mosaic. They win. In August I am chosen as a Finalist in the competition. I do not appreciate the attention but I eventually see it as a way to represent and market Mosaic.

On the 27th November 2003 Pam Foster and I launch our clinic facilities with a plaque thanking WPF and Pam Foster for their generous donation. We declare the Women’s Wellness Clinic open. It is another occasion for celebration. We shall offer reproductive health services, termination of pregnancy (TOP), HIV/AIDS testing and counselling for women who are raped and abused and who attend the clinic.

I decide to hold my 60th Birthday party in Mosaic’s beautiful hall and I can seat all my guests comfortably. My mom attends and my

best friends come down from Johannesburg. All my community workers are invited. They sit at the different tables and act as 'Mosaic hostesses' with my family and friends. Our young group of musicians perform for us. They include Mia's daughter and her young friends. They add to the atmosphere of smiling faces and happiness. I am in Birthday Heaven.

During early 2004 we hold many meetings with doctors, nurses and members of the Department of Health to plan for the opening of our Women's Wellness Clinic. We are fortunate to have Richard Berzelman a senior member of the Department of Health and Dr Marijke Alblas who give their pro-bono services to the clinic. We are grateful to receive their help with our planning, licensing and setting up the clinic. Two additional nurses will work in the clinic during their own private time. These Women's Wellness Service in health care demonstrates Mosaic's 'continuum of care' for abused women clients.



*Pam Foster, me, and Richard Berzelman at the launch
of our Women's Wellness Centre*

We design and set up a website. It is a great resource which can be accessed by the public with our services placed on our website. We receive some funding support through the website and get

positive feedback. My happiest moments are when our Funders visit us and I can take them out into the communities to see our staff working with our projects. We receive the best compliment from one of our International funders who says that Mosaic is his favourite NGO. I am thrilled to hear him say this and so is our staff.

Tragically and despite our best care and assistance we cannot change everyone's life around. Mia tells us that last week her young client was murdered by her violent partner outside her father's house. Last week this young client told Mia that she would 'better be dead' and the following week she is stabbed to death. We are all shocked and terribly sad to hear this tragic news. Mia is particularly crushed with the loss of her client although she knows that she cannot take responsibility for her death. Our staff attend the funeral. Mia speaks at her funeral and pays tribute to her client's beautiful and sensitive soul.

We all ask ourselves "When will the violence stop"? And what amazes me is that there is no newspaper coverage about these murders. Black and coloured people's lives are not noteworthy. We know that for funders and the general public, violence against women is not on their priority list of attention. Breaking the silence against abuse is not easy for us. We feel it is utterly devastating that not enough attention is paid to violence against women and people really do not care.

We have such respect for our clients and we have such admiration for their courage and tenacity to survive the violence. Every small, positive change that we observe keeps us motivated to carry on. On Fridays at supervision we thank God a thousand times for giving us the gift to serve and heal abused women. In supervision Nomvuzo and Zoleka are delighted to tell their colleagues about the Flower Show where they exhibited at the Cape Town Convention Centre. They tell us that the public asked them many questions about their Mosaic Portable Drum Gardens and they proudly gave them Information. They also exhibit at the Waterfront's 'Earth Festival' and at Mitchells Plain.

They tell us that Christine Quickfall, Director of Poverty Alleviation, visits some of the client's gardens with them. Their clients are quick to tell Christine that Nomvuzo and Zoleka teach

them Pemaculture skills and their gardens are growing and productive. They also tell her that they are happy to pick fresh healthy food each day to feed their families. Christine is very impressed.

Our Social Auxiliary Workers tell Nomvuzo and Zoleka how pleased their own forty seven clients are for learning the skills of Permaculture from them. When they counsel their clients they share their appreciation of their gardens with our Social Auxiliary Workers.

Our statistics are impressive despite the numbers which drop because of the block placements for 26 weeks of their Social Auxiliary Work's course. Last year they help more than 120,000 people who benefit from our social services. Yet they still reach 75,000 people this year and I am delighted for them. When I share their statistics they talk about the time when they could not deliver services and they worried that the statistics will be lower.

When I meet with the court workers I tell them that the Court Support Desks reached a total of almost 28,000 applicants for Protection Orders. Each one of the people that they help is changed in some important way this year. They are also impressed with the results and with themselves.

It is almost the end of this year. I ask our court workers to please ask their twelve Magistrates to write us references about our court work. It is valuable feedback for our workers as it motivates them and confirms the essential nature of their work. Most importantly it is feedback for me about our court workers' role in the courts.

At our next supervision session all of our court workers share the references they received from the Magistrates and Control Officers in court. Some of them are hand written and some are typed and signed. When we read their remarks we are overwhelmed by the Magistrate's personally written notes.

Mr Swart the Magistrate from Mitchells Plain Court, the first court where we started to work writes *"The very important and vital role that Mosaic court workers play at court is acknowledged. It is confirmed that the services rendered are essential and much needed. The fact that Mosaic made a simple 'booklet' available to all courts regarding domestic violence is very helpful to applicants and is indicative of Mosaic's commitment to assisting people harmed by domestic violence. It is of the utmost importance that Mosaic keeps the project going."*

Mr van Reenen the Wynberg Magistrate who has supported us from the moment that we started working there writes: *“Every effort is made to bring relief to the victims of family violence and in most cases this is done. It could not be done without the support and commitment shown by members of Mosaic.”*

Mr Blignaut the Magistrate from Bellville Court generously writes *“Mosaic has moved from strength to strength and has proved themselves to be professional and very helpful with completing affidavits and applications for Protection Orders. Mosaic as an NGO has become the ‘adopted child’ of the Department of Justice... Thank you for extraordinary services rendered at the Bellville Court.”*

Mr Manuel the Deputy Director of Cape Town’s Court writes *“This is to acknowledge and extend a vote of thanks to the services that Mosaic has rendered in this office. Without your support this office would lie in crisis, bearing in mind the shortage of staff that we have.”*

Mr de Bruin the Office Manager of Phillipi Court writes *“Without the help of an NGO like Mosaic we would be unable to assist the number of clients who seek relief from abuse through Protection Orders and Peace Orders. The work that Mosaic does at court is highly appreciated and they definitely play a role in supporting victims of domestic violence.”*

Ms Burgess the Office Manager from Khayelitsha Court writes *“Mosaic assists our clerks on a daily basis and they are very helpful and sympathetic towards the clients. Without them we shall not be able to render a quality service to the members of the public.”*

Mr Cronje the Magistrate from Paarl Court writes *“Most of our clients are not able to complete the prescribed forms themselves and do not know their rights in terms of the relevant legislation. Mosaic renders a great service to the public and we can’t function without them.”*

Mr Pieterse the Magistrate from Kuils River Court writes *“It is a well-known fact that excellent work is being performed by the court workers in assisting with Protection Orders, Variations, Warrant of Arrests and crisis and intervention Counselling. Mosaic is thanked for the exceptional work performed to enhance service delivery at our courts.”*

We excitedly discuss how we are the first NGO to provide these services and are probably the first NGO to prove ourselves to be skilled and competent workers in the courts. We are supported by the Justice Department that appreciates our work to augment our

services to their courts. For all of us it is an unbelievable achievement to get such recognition. Great accolades to all of us.

It has proven to be so valuable and appreciated by the Magistrates, the Deputy Director and Office Managers. I know that our court project is unique when we initiated it some years ago. I felt that the Court Support Desks would flourish and today with the support from the courts my instincts are gratefully and thankfully fulfilled.

This court project supports nameless victim of abuse whose lives have subsequently changed from their help and support. At our Board meeting I share the Magistrates' comments with our Board members who are delighted and praise our court workers and Mosaic. I thank them for being our outstanding friends. They are the captains of our ship steering us on the right course. They say that they are always there for us and gratefully give their humble contributions to Mosaic. I keep on thinking of their supportive role for Mosaic with the Biehls.

Tertia comes to see me. She is doing her PHD through Stellenbosch University. Because of our court work she wants to work with Mosaic on a doctoral research study to find out the effectiveness of the Interim Protection Order. We are happy to have her work with us.

Many people ask us how effective the Interim Protection Order actually is. Although we have assisted over 100,000 applicants with Protection Orders over the past years, we have not been able to answer them. The Interim Protection Order is given to applicants when they apply for the Order and before they finally return to have the Final Protection Order granted to them by the court. The results will inform the Government and interested parties both nationally and internationally.

Tertia often comes to meet with me at the office. I give her complete access to our Forms. There are days when I pass the office and I see her working diligently on the endless piles of Forms filled in by our court workers. She takes boxes of forms home with her because there are so many to deal with. Tertia hands in her completed research study and we wait successfully for her results. It is the first PHD research study with Mosaic's assistance.

It is now mid-August 2004. Riaan and I are at logger-heads because I have wanted to give our Social Auxiliary Workers a monetary gift as a 'thank you' from the Board and from Mosaic. They work so hard and they earn so little. Riaan is the financial person and is frightened about wasting Mosaic's money. With the shortage of funds, he will not give in. I realise the Board must make the decision, not Riaan or me. I tell the Board what I want to do. Hugh is excellent at the Board meeting. My Board is compassionate, professional and well-grounded. They can see how much it means to me and agrees to pay half the amount that I originally wanted to give to the staff

I want Riaan to witness it for himself about how much the gift will mean to them. On Friday at supervision everyone is seated in their circle. I ask someone to call Riaan to come into the meeting. He has to be there when I break the news. Riaan arrives and they look very suspicious. What is going to happen?

I say that I know they are having a hard time with the small amount of money that they earn. They carefully acknowledge this but they are still apprehensive so I tell them that today we are putting R5,000 into their accounts. They take a moment to react and then they all break into tears, loud and powerful tears. It is heart-wrenching to hear them cry so openly. Never could they imagine that this would happen. Riaan is also shocked. Never could he have imagined that they would react as they have just done.

It is one of those days that I shall never forget. All I can do is say thank you God, thank you, thank you. I only push that hard when I know that things have to happen. I do not know how powerful our gift to them will be. Humbling, I just cry with gratitude and thanks, as everyone in the room cries with me.

I am so relieved and delighted that Riaan experiences our community workers' response to the gift. I think that he realises that I feel the pulse of the staff and he should just trust me.

I also have a difference of opinion with Laura, our fundraiser whom we now employ at Mosaic who tells me that she cannot raise funds for the Clinic as she is a Christian and pro-life. I have to justify why we are pro-choice for our women clients who are raped or deserted by their partners and who go for illegal abortions and are sometimes killed in the process. I tell her that we have to have a

‘continuum of care’ for our abused clients. I am fond of Laura but she knows that Mosaic is pro-choice. She apologises but there is nothing that I can do to change her mind. I like Laura and do not want to let her go but I do not want to write proposals and reports again especially as Laura is now employed as our fundraiser. If I cannot write proposals we may have to change fundraisers.

Staff problems affect me. I have these times when I feel down and the times when I feel up. I really do not like it when I feel alone and responsible for Mosaic and for the disrespectful behaviour of members of staff. These are obviously all the difficult lessons that I have to learn. I have no choice but to confront them and learn how to deal with them. I remember the saying ‘sick and tired’ and that is where I am today.

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“I am writing again. I feel vulnerable and I must let the pain out. I forget when I am feeling down, restless and lonely and that it is the pain that I need to release. It bottles up, the dark side, the sore parts that lie hidden down in my solar plexus. It is a difficult time.

I feel tired most of the time from work and all its problems. So unsettled. I have been doing a lot of Rolene bashing lately. As I told my Social Auxiliary Workers yesterday at supervision, I am losing sight of who I am and what I am doing and what I have done to make a difference in people lives. I have to dig deep to remember the differences I have made and the struggles for achievement. Then I find the positives in all these negatives and feel better about myself. The staff were so supportive of me yesterday. When I am in this mood I have no energy or inclination to be with anyone.

My crazy writing is almost mirroring me and my fragmented thoughts today. I intellectualize. But my feelings catch up with me and overwhelm me. Then I can only ‘feel’. My mind plays games trying to ride me and whip me with things that I think I should be doing. I keep on thinking that I must sort things out. I cannot go on like this.”

More Changes in the Wind

It is now early December 2004 and nearing the end of another year. I am still in the position of Executive Director after almost 12 years at Mosaic. These twelve years have made me 'who I am'. I have grown and learnt so much. I have met amazing people who I would not have met before and done things that I would never have imagined I could do. I have reached the height of pride, excitement and joy and slipped into the depths of pain, anger and despair. I have sworn at God so many times but I have loved and adored God with all my being at the same time. I gave birth to Mosaic. I am bonded to it forever.

However, my mom is terminally ill. The doctor gives her three to six months to live. My dilemma is that I urgently want to be with my mom and be with Mosaic at the same time. I do not want to feel guilty that I cannot spend my time with my mom while I work at Mosaic. Mosaic is a fulltime job. It is a huge and scary responsibility. I need to make up my mind about what I want to do.

This morning Riaan comes to tell me that if I am thinking of leaving Mosaic, Marieta is leaving her organisation as Executive Director. If I want her to come to Mosaic I need to speak to her as quickly as possible. I am so happy because Marieta knows Mosaic, has been on our Board, she was my Assistant Director for five years and I feel that she is the most suitable person for the position. We do not have to advertise but we can head-hunt her instead. I call her and tell her what Riaan has shared with me. We make an arrangement to meet at my mom's apartment to talk.

Marieta and I have supper with my mom. Then we leave her to watch TV and we go up the road to have coffee and to share a piece of cake and discuss the option together. During our talk I say that with both of us in Mosaic then the sky is no longer the limit. We shall have possibilities to move way above and beyond the sky. We both know Mosaic better than anyone else and having the two of us in

Mosaic will be incredible. I just keep on thinking how amazing this will be.

Marieta says that when she spoke to her husband about coming back to Mosaic she thought it was not a good idea. She questions what will happen if she does something that I do not like? I tell her that I cannot believe that she will do things that I do not like. We have worked forever together and if she makes changes then I am sure I shall be fine with them. I say that I would like to be the Director of Development and the Outreach for the Court Project. We shall have to work this out. But if we work together we just need to respect each other.

When she leaves to return home I go back to my mom and tell her that Marieta has accepted the offer to come to Mosaic. My mom is thrilled and she says “Thank God I am still here to hear the news”.

It is the 3rd of December 2004. I need to tell my Board about my mom’s terminal illness and that I spoke to Marieta about coming into Mosaic next year as the Executive Director. I am not sure how they will feel about me doing this. All I know is that if I do not react quickly after Riaan tells me the news, Marieta will resign from her present job and take on another position with another organisation. I do not want this to happen.

I sit down and write a most difficult letter to my Board of Directors. I want it to know the predicament that I am in and understand it from my perspective. I want it to accept my decision to hand over to Marieta. I am so close to all my Board members and I do not want to upset them or lose trust with them.

“Hello my Friends,

This is a difficult email for me to write. Last week I found out that my mother is terminally ill and we don’t have too much longer with her. It could be anything from three to six months.

The reason for my writing is that I am very concerned about Mosaic. I am torn. I don’t ever want to regret that I should have been with my mom and I wasn’t there for her. And I don’t want to regret that I should have been in the office and I wasn’t there for Mosaic either. I have no idea of what lies in store for me next year with all that is happening in Mosaic. We need a Director to be at the helm.

My first instinct was to call Marieta. She is resigning as Director. I hope that you don't mind that I approached her as she knows Mosaic so well, she has been on the Board with you and worked for five years with me soon after the establishment of Mosaic. I asked her only with your permission to come back to Mosaic as Executive Director. She will consider the position only once it is sanctioned by you.

I would then take up the position of Development Director if you are in agreement. As you know, from our OD workshops and Restructuring exercises, we came up with positions for two Directors, the Executive and the Development Director.

I have been out of the office for this past week to be with my mom and haven't been able to get my thinking right. I need to put the best person into my position as quickly as possible.

I don't know if and when Marieta would be able to start. It is a great responsibility that I carry now. I hope to hear from you to gain an idea of your combined decision. Then we can go forward together. Of course it would be better to deal with this at a Board meeting but time is of the essence. Please let me know what your decision is.

*Thank you so much,
Me*

It is December and the Festive Season. There are many visitors and friends in Cape Town from Johannesburg and elsewhere. I do not feel festive in any way. My time is spent with my mom and I worry about Mosaic.

In December 2004 at our last supervision with my staff I do not mention the fact that Marieta will be coming back to Mosaic. I am not sure how they will accept and understand my reason for retiring as their Executive Director. They think that I shall be with them forever.

I want us to all have a great holiday without any thoughts of my separation from them as Executive Director. Next year can stay with next year, not to be dealt with now. Although they do not know how things will change at Mosaic, it is important for me to have their memories of our time over the years that we have been together.

I ask them how it is for them since they began training with Mosaic and how they have changed in the twelve years that have

passed. It just seems to be the right way to end our supervision sessions together and they are all happy to share.

Alice is the first to share and what she shares is applicable for us all. *"I have changed tremendously since I started. What I learnt was to be a strong pillar for Mosaic in Mbekweni so that people can lean on me. I've knocked on all the doors of lawyers, the municipality, NGOs around Mbekweni so that Mosaic can be there forever. I also changed myself. I used to be scared to express myself especially if there was something that I didn't like in church. This is because the Catholic culture says women must be quiet and men are doing everything. I voiced out one day at a meeting in church I said "As Alice Kokhlakala I have also got a right to stand on the pulpit in our culture because as a woman you say we cannot go and stand on the pulpit, only men". Then I walked straight up to the pulpit and I voiced out my voice. I said that you are men but we are the same. I can also tell the people what they need to hear on the pulpit and men didn't support me but some of the women were supporting me and some were saying "Hush. It is wrong Sissie. You do not respect". But at the end of the day now we've got lay ministers that are women. Women that can now say how they feel. I am proud of this. I can say that I am really positive of myself. I can stand more especially in my house. My husband knows he is sick but I told him that "You can do what you want, but I am going to Mosaic's meeting". That's how I feel. He cannot say I cannot go because he is sick. If it was me who was sick he would leave me and go out anyway. In my street they know me if something is wrong. They'll say "Don't tell Mama Alice" because I cannot hide anything that is wrong. I cannot hide anything. I don't have hidden agendas if something is wrong it is wrong. Josephine made up terrible stories about me. I was so glad that God said "Come black shepherd, come and show people what kind of a person you are". I am happy that Josephine is no longer with Mosaic. All my daughters are married. If the husband is doing something that I don't like, I just go and say "Hey Wena, come here! Don't say this and that to my daughter. This is my child". I've grown up tremendously. I am no longer scared and I am really proud of myself."*

We all thank Alice. We laugh at her scolding her sons-in-law because little did they know what an empowered mother-in-law they were going to get. We are all proud of her standing up for herself and the women in church. And we again laugh at her boldness when she talks about her husband's illness. Alice is a real and loud character.

Primrose speaks next *“I’ve changed so much. Firstly when I came to Mosaic I learnt to know ‘who is Primrose?’ I think it is because of the information that I got from Mosaic. I learnt that I mustn’t live other people’s lives. I must live my life by doing what I want to do. Secondly I learnt to identify my feelings. I really felt what am I feeling and to me it is a big big lesson. Thirdly I learnt that the skills that I got made me to be well informed with good information. And I am proud of the skills that I got from Mosaic. That makes me feel that I am empowered and I am sure of myself. I am so confident of myself wherever I am. I am this Primrose. I’ve learnt to face my challenges assertively that’s what helped me a lot. Being assertive, of which I never knew about before I came to Mosaic for such a long time. But I know what I know and I say it even to other people. People noticed a lot of changes in me. They noticed from the first day that I started the course because I left Shepherd sick at home. There was no income and I went for this course. Other people phoned me to come and work but I said no. I said I don’t want to work with clothing factories, I am looking forward to helping women who are abused. The change was that people were angry with me for doing that. Why am I taking a step of going to learn, not getting a job and look after my husband? I can write a book”.*

I ask Dawn *“How did you change?”*

“I think for me the greatest change at Mosaic has been able to have the opportunity to share, to talk, to express myself, to share my personal experiences. That really gave me a voice. When I was given the space to do that in the group it was for me truly part of the healing process. Having the platform to talk and share and deal with the anger, the hurt and the pain and all of that. I think that at Mosaic it was actually healing me so that I could become a healer. Others have said that the bond started when we could identify with each other and support each other with no one judging anyone else. The space was like experiencing freedom for the first time to be able to be myself. That has allowed me over the years to give me possibilities to share my personal experience with the public and speak to other people about it. And not see it or even be conscious that people might judge me or want to judge me. But hoping that somebody can learn from it and grow through it and also realise and understand that if you have been abused and have survived it, you are a survivor. It is OK to talk about it. That has been my greatest lesson. The change has been a gradual process that’s because change is not easy as we know.

“But for me the greatest benefits that I’ve received is the relationships I have built amongst my colleagues amongst people in the community that I’ve worked

with. It is been nearly ten years for me at Mosaic. I can proudly say that I have made lots of inroads, built lots of relationships, lots of opportunities and lots of changes. I feel that I have been part of a journey for a lot of people not only myself and it is a good feeling. I'll never forget that you always said that our Strength is that we know things, but our Weakness is that we seem to Forget. And we often have to remind ourselves and each other. And this is what we often do for those of us who forget what they know. That is something that no-one can take from us no matter what. It is priceless no price attached to it. That's the true gift of God. And the other thing that I always remember is what you told us about the 'Pen and the Ink'. I always remember that and some days when I am so frustrated and I am so ready to give up, and I ask God to please fill me and fill my pen with ink so that I can carry on. And then I carry on filled with ink. I still hold onto what Mosaic is supposed to be. So for me this is what keeps me going. I try to hold on to what we have learnt and who we are and not allow anybody to change who we are. And still not forgetting where we are coming from and why we are here. We have all become teachers through what we have learnt at Mosaic. I love teaching. When I stand in front of people and I train and I talk, I thoroughly enjoy doing that."

Caroline is keen to talk next. *"I don't know where to start because there is so much that I have learnt. Firstly I've learnt that where I am today is to learn to love myself, believe in myself and trust myself. I came here not knowing who I was and what my purpose in life was. I didn't know anything about a journey and challenges for me. Life was a punishment. And the question was 'What have I done to deserve this punishment?' When I came here I got all the answers and I think it is helping me even now. It is to share by giving me a platform to share my own experiences, and to get in touch with my feelings as a human being.*

"You know when I was talking to another lady from Idasa when they were here in at Mosaic it came to the point of sharing with her about hugs. I said to her that I didn't know about hugs before Mosaic. A hug was only coming from a mother, sister or friend and it wasn't really that hug coming from a male partner. When I was talking to her she was crying when I told her that Rolene who is the founder of this building was the woman who taught me how to hug. She would say, "Listen to my heart Caroline and come close and hold me." And she would hold me until I could feel. The lady from Idasa asked me how did I feel when Rolene hugged me. And I said that I felt uncomfortable at first because it wasn't something that I knew. How could a woman touch me like this? Even a man never touched me like this. At the beginning when you hugged me with love, I

quickly wanted to let go. Then you would grab me back. It was probably about six months of being in class when I started to feel comfortable with the hugs. But today I am so thankful for those huggings because I give them to my grandchildren. They know they are loved because every time I hug them they know that I love them.

“When I left the classroom going out into the field for community work I was okay because I had this confidence in me. It was the Inner Child experience for me that will always be the shining star because it was when I found my real self and that is helping me very much. I can identify with others because of my own childhood experiences. Because of this when I do counselling if I haven’t gone back there with my client, even those who do not want to go there because it is so painful, I know I have been there and it heals everyone. There is never even a day that I forget when we did those exercises of going back into our childhood and the meditation that we did after the exercise. And I still do this exercise with my clients. And in the meditation you said go to one of the trees, sit under it and think about the day that you were happy, jumping, feeling happy inside. And that is the day that I saw myself sitting under the tree crying as a child wearing Xmas clothes. For me it was a question why I was feeling so sad when I was wearing Xmas clothes? Xmas day is supposed to be a joyful day but it wasn’t a joyful day for me, why? Then I asked that question when I came out of the garden. I remember when Susi also came and did an exercise on drawing a big tree. I didn’t notice that my tree had no roots. Then Susi looked at my drawing and asked me what is missing and I didn’t see what it was until she asked how a tree can be without roots. She helped me to look at myself and taking responsibility for my roots.

“The lessons that I also learnt was about communication with God. That’s also very powerful and it is still helping me. I was sharing that with my pastor who speaks my language because he talks about life and not about punishment. He talks about challenges, things that you can overcome and things that you can change your life. So that is what I got from Mosaic. I can talk the whole day when I talk about the changes and about now. Really when we were sharing stories we didn’t come with one thing. Some of our group were coming with different things. And with those that were connected to ourselves and to more, what I saw was it was something that also happened to me. Yes Mosaic changed my life.”

When Caroline finishes sharing her thoughts she tells us that she loves to hug everyone. Her colleagues agree and say that Caroline is now our big hugger and our big talker. They smile along with her.

Leonorah wants to talk about Mosaic teaching her to believe in herself. *‘I’ve learnt not to underestimate myself because a lot of times I’ve proven that I can do things. There are people around me that have helped me a lot. Also a lesson of believing in myself. I didn’t stand up for myself before. People would think that I can do something even though I didn’t believe that I can do it. I waited for people to say that I can do it. But now I’ve got a strong feeling of saying ‘I can’. I believe myself now. That’s the lesson that I got from Mosaic. Knowing and being exposed to different kinds of people’s lives in our group made me want to come each and every day. And also to identify and know myself and to start to respect myself and set boundaries for myself. That was also a lesson for me because I always used to put other people first. Now I start to put myself first and that is helping me in the long run I cannot change things that cannot be changed and I shall change things that I can. Before I used to push to do things that I wouldn’t be able to change. But now I am really myself and I have come through. All the time I was in a cocoon staying and roaming around in this cocoon trying to find out who I am. But now my life is positive, so positive that each and every day I am seeing lights. I am not in darkness anymore and it is because of what I got here. Mosaic’s skills that I learnt here are making me humble. I have the pride but I also have the humility.’*

For me, Nomvuzo has grown the most of all my women. She came as a quiet, little, innocent trainee who could not speak English and was brought to Mosaic by Jean. I ask her what is the most important thing that she learnt about herself and how has she changed.

‘Firstly what I learnt was to stand up for myself, to be confident. I also know if it is not OK for me, it is not OK. And that is what I learnt. I am confident that I can stand up for myself. But the very important thing from the beginning was to know how to speak English because when I got here it was not easy. I learnt about words that I never never knew in my life like assertive, non-assertive. There were days because of this tough training I thought ‘Hey I am not going back again!’ Because I wasn’t able to speak English properly I remember that I was allowed to write my tests in Xhosa, my language. I’ll never ever forgot in my life what kind of an angel allowed someone to speak and write her tests in her own language. I saw that motherhood and love was different from the other NGOs in Cape Town. I remember when my son passed away then my colleagues were supporting me. They came to my house and were with me when we didn’t know where Siphe was. Then when I found him in the fridge my director and my

colleagues were by my side and with me and I was supported by all of them. So for me Mosaic was learning about love, support and trust.”

We all go back to Nomvuzo’s heartrending and agonising time when Siphe went missing and Jean and Zoleka went around with loudspeakers in the township for four days looking for him. And the horrifying moment when Nomvuzo was sweeping her back room and decided to open the old fridge and found Siphe in it. That tragic time comes back to us and we are all silent. It is heroic for her to insert Siphe’s death into the memories of how she has changed and what she has learnt from Mosaic. Nomvuzo is such a courageous and lovable woman. She has to be admired for her strength and bravery.

At the end of the sharing by everyone in the group, I thank them and tell them that I am more than proud of them. They came into Mosaic as poorly educated and unskilled women. They can now look at themselves as highly skilled, strong and empowered women who have helped and assisted hundreds and thousands of abused and violated women during their time with Mosaic. There are no words that can describe how much love, affection and admiration I have for them.



Our circle in our new hall at Mosaic

From left: Primrose, Noxolo, Jean, Lungiswa, Sheilla, me, Zarina, Mia, Zoleka, Nomvuzo, Caroline

I bring Riaan into the hall. The staff, Riaan and I have the chance to wish each other a Happy Xmas and a Happy New Year. They thank me and Riaan for looking after them during this year.

And now it is time to say goodbye. We wish each other a happy peaceful holiday and a safe trip if they are going home to the Eastern Cape and we wish each other a safe return to Cape Town. We hug and kiss and say our farewells until we meet again next year.

When they all leave the office a piece of my heart shrivels inside me. I feel dreadful. I sincerely hope that I shall work with Mosaic next year after I have handed over the Executive Director's position to Marieta. But what makes me feel ill, is that I shall have to share my news about leaving Mosaic when I see them again.

Leaving Mosaic

While I am briefly back at Mosaic during the beginning of 2005 I am grateful that Martine and my sister Ann will be with mom. There is a lot to be done in the office and I have to return to check proposals and reports with Riaan that have to be sent off and supervise the staff when they return from their holiday.

Once the Board accepts my letter I am pleased that Marieta can be our new Executive Director. It is such a relief. Marieta has to resign and work off her leave and she can begin to work at Mosaic in March. I still want to be working with Mosaic and what position I can hold must be sorted out with Marieta. Importantly I have to let the staff know what has happened to me and to Mosaic while they are away. They have to know about my decision to resign as Executive Director and I have to tell them about Marieta coming back to Mosaic.

Our staff returns mid-January. It seems as if we have all been away for a very long time. Everyone is pleased to see each other again. During our go-around they share stories of where they went and what they did. They are all glad to be back and ready to go into the community and into the courts once more.

At this first supervision I tell my staff about my mother's terminal illness. I share with them that I do not know how long she has to be with us, but we hope that she can still live for another three months. I tell them that I need to be with my mother and not feel guilty about not being at Mosaic. Everyone knows my mom. She has supported us and been at our community events and at our AGMs where they all hug her and tell her that they love her. My mom loves them too. They are upset by my news and they have great empathy for me. They ask me to send their love to my mom. It is difficult not to cry when I am with them but I am as positive as I can be.

I tell them that I have asked Marieta to come back to Mosaic as their new Executive Director. They are taken by surprise. They are very concerned that I am resigning. I tell them that I shall not leave

Mosaic but hope to become the Director of Development. With this news they seem to brighten up. I am relieved. I have broken the difficult news and they seem to accept the fact that there will be big changes in Mosaic. They understand why I have to stand down as the Executive.

After a short supervision session where we reconnect and plan for the next week's work in the community and the courts, they all go home. When they leave they give me huge hugs and wish me well. I have just dropped a bombshell on them. It will take time for them to digest this information.

Mostly I am okay whilst I am at the office in the morning. But just the tiniest thing can trigger the sadness. When Riaan enters my office after supervision and looks at me with a sorrowful look on his face, it cracks me up. I am tearful. Riaan knows my mom well and he is so sweet. He puts his arm around me. He says that he cannot imagine what it must be like. He knows it is difficult for me to leave my mom and be in the office. We both know that I have to be here. There is so much that we have to do together and plan for right at the beginning of this year.

Riaan knows that I have spoken to Marieta about the Executive position and that she accepts our offer. Both he and I are grateful that Marieta is coming back and I can hand over to her. We both trust her. Now it is such a relief for me to settle this enormous dilemma and know that I can spend time with mom. Mosaic will be safe.

When I return to the apartment I tell mom, Teen and Ann about my morning. They are glad that I told the staff about Marieta and that I told them I am stepping down from being Executive Director. Mom is pleased to hear that the staff sends her their love.

I am living with grief and death. I cry for the times that are changing and for a life that I must make on my own. At night I cry for my mom that I am losing. I lie in bed thinking about everything that is changing so quickly. My dad and my mom showed me the real values of caring, loving and service to our fellow human beings. They showed me how to be the best human being that I can be. I am also who I am because of them.

I still go to Mosaic for a short while every day. We interview new social workers. It is great having Marieta to help with the interviews.

On the evening of February 5th my mom takes her last breath. She goes earlier than expected. But she is at peace.

I return to Mosaic but my heart is not in it. I write a letter to our funders telling them that I am no longer the Executive Director but with my mind all confused and troubled with the trauma that I have been through I forget completely to email it off.

Riaan and I work together to finish our ongoing work before Marieta comes back to Mosaic in three weeks' time. He has been wonderful and caring.

Spending some time in my office for the last time I think of all the good and bad times gone by. Today I stand with my back resting against my desk, balancing on it. I survey my office. I know that I am going to move on and this office will not be mine anymore. It is a very weird and strange feeling.

Handing Over

Today is the 9th of March and I am in Pretoria. Caroline and I are attending the Idasa Leadership Course. It was arranged a few months before I handed over to Marieta. I chose Caroline to accompany me. It is marvellous travelling with Caroline. She has not been on a flight before. She is so excited and so am I.

We stay in the most appalling hotel in Pretoria. When I arrive at the hotel I want to call mom. I remember how happy she was to hear from me last time when I called to say that I had arrived safely. I miss her so much. I have been grateful to have Caroline here with me to talk to. I am still confused and unsettled. Mom died a month ago and Marieta has been the Executive Director for one week. I am in Pretoria and life goes on.

The course is okay but Caroline and I know most of the Leadership skills. Caroline and I sit on opposite sides of the room so we can interact more easily with the other participants. We often eye each other across the room.

At lunch time on our first day Caroline tells me that the other participants think that Caroline is the Director of Mosaic and I am one of her staff members. I love this and we laugh. I tell her that it is the greatest compliment that anyone can pay me. She is well trained and I am proud that she represents Mosaic and herself so powerfully.

In Pretoria I call Jeff Bakken from USAID. I respect and I am fond of Jeff. He is shocked to hear that I am no longer the Executive Director of Mosaic. I feel so awful that I did not send out that letter telling everyone that Marieta is taking over from me. It has been in my draft folder for weeks. I reassure Jeff that I am not going anywhere and that when his colleague from the States visits Cape Town this month I shall fetch her, take her out into the community and bring her back for supervision with all of our women.

It is now the end of March and I am sitting in my 'new' corner office upstairs. It is a tiny room but it is the only office available for me. I am writing my Director's Report for our Annual Report of 2004

/ 2005. I am pleased that I have begun. I write as the Director but I am not the Director.

Rotary has funded us to do court workers' training. We will be doing research material development, marketing and training. I shall be contracted to Mosaic for three and a half days per week which gives me one and a half days to have to myself. I ask her if I shall still earn what I have received so far. She does not seem to have a problem, hoping to get money for training. This is how I shall be paid.

It is wonderful to be back in training again. These last two weeks of training with the court workers is great. I am not a threat to Caroline who trains with me. She enjoys the training and so do all the court workers. We train them in public education as I did for my Social Auxiliary Workers so long ago. The first group gives us feedback and says that it is so easy to learn with us rather than with the other Mosaic trainers. They repeat over and over again that the work is clear for them. I feel so focused when I am in my natural environment of teaching and training again. I love it.

Taking the lead with the second group of court workers and then recapping with the first group gives me a clear idea of what I have to look at when I do the material development for their accreditation. I am loving the court workers' training and I look forward to finish educating them. I also work on writing the couple counselling handouts for the court workers for next week's training sessions. We get so much pleasure when we are together.

It is difficult for me to tell them that I am leaving but I have to do it. They are upset with me for stepping down. Some of them are so angry that they cannot even look at me. Nomvuzo is extremely angry. She asks me vehemently why I am leaving. She wants me to stay and she does not know why I am resigning. She is not happy with the social worker taking over their supervision period. I try to placate her but I cannot. She is furious with me and furious with what is happening to them and to Mosaic. Her eyes blaze red and she is close to tears. She refers to Marieta as a step mother.

I tell them that for me, it is not Mosaic as the organisation that is important, but our skills and training. If I think of myself as fulfilling the organisation's potential, then I have failed to see it to its

completion. It is what Mosaic has done for all of us by fulfilling the growth and empowerment of us that is the highest achievement that I can ever wish for. I hope that I have achieved this.

It is fair for them to follow Marieta as their Executive Director and not be confused by me also being in a position of authority. It is not fair to them or to Marieta. Marieta is more of a business person and she is remarkable at raising funds and dealing with proposals, administration and budgets.

I visit Sheryl and tell her that I must leave Mosaic completely. I know that this is what I must do and that everything happens for a reason. She says that I am too valuable to society to stay in Mosaic. I must document Mosaic to replicate it elsewhere. Sheryl says that a leader gets out when they have done everything that they can do and there is no more learning. She also says that the Board wants to give me a farewell party she insists that it is the right way to say goodbye to the staff and I can invite any of our funders to attend as well.

On Saturday I receive a letter to say that I am nominated as one of 14 South African women for the 1,000 Women for the Noble Peace Prize. I read the letter and wish that I could take it to show mom and dad and sit with them and enjoy their pleasure. At times I realise that this is such a big honour and at times I cannot believe it. Then I think that whether or not we are awarded the peace prize, I am in the company of an amazing 1,000 empowered and enterprising women from all over the world. For this reason it is a big honour to be chosen.

Journal May 2005

"Today I need to reminisce and think about all of us at Mosaic, what we did and what we are. It lifts me and gives me a place to rest in. I need to go back and raise my self-esteem which is low at the moment.

From the very beginning of our training I made everyone understand that we are Mosaic. Mosaic is ours, it belongs to each one of us. As we have all repeated so many times and believed it completely, "I am Mosaic because if it wasn't for me there wouldn't be a Mosaic". We all knew that each one of us in our own right is Mosaic.

We had complete identity and ownership of what we created with great struggle. Our achievements and successes have been beyond our wildest dreams. It

was each one of us that made Mosaic into what it has become today and made us into who we are.

We grew to be proud of ourselves and of our organisation. Each one of us became powerful healers, teachers and leaders in the field. Each one became caring and compassionate counsellors. We've been honest, responsible and effective achievers both personally and professionally. We did it on our own but we could never have achieved this without the love and the sisterhood of our group.

Individually and collectively I believe that we had the most incredible recipe for success. I don't know of another organisation like Mosaic. It was a family NGO that thrived on love and caring for each other and passing this all on to our abused and battered clients. That is where the magic began and where the healing happened."

Gifts

It is now Thursday the 27th May and the farewell party is to be held at Mosaic. I am not looking forward to it. But I steel myself and I try to be strong. It is interesting that I wear black with a very bright deep purple scarf as if the intensity of the spirit is there to protect me. I wonder if I shall ever wear it again.

My Social Auxiliary Workers and Court Workers buzz around me, and when the singing and dancing begins they circle around me and give me blessings one at a time. Each time I turn around to receive them we are completely in synch. I feel their protection.

Then Hilda performs her 'Praise Dance' robed in her tribal dress, singing and dancing for me. It is powerful and such a privilege and an honour. She sings about me and what I have given to them and that they must take what I have given to them and use it in the world. Oh God it is so huge to have my praises sung by my staff member.

Sheryl, Mosaic's Chairperson, speaks beautifully. She first talks about how she and I spoke about the enormous problem of women abuse several years ago in Knysna. She speaks about being in awe of me then, a wife, mother of twins and a 40 year old woman who had a calling to change my comfortable life to help abused women. She says that I stood out amongst the people who wanted to give back to the land that we love.

She speaks about the Social Work training that I did before starting Mosaic, about the skills that I gave to our community workers and how outstanding and courageous they are in helping abused women. She says that the way they work with abused women is a testimony to the initial values, knowledge and mentoring that I have put into place. She also mentions the three periods of near bankruptcy and says that even then we still served thousands of people each year despite our financial hardships.

She recounts how Mosaic has changed my life, afforded me precious friendships with my colleagues and built up a strong personal faith system. She talks of how I have always said that the

physical and mental aspects of my life are in fact complement to spirit. She knows that the spirit and our attachment to the Divine, will remain intact, complete, all-knowing and everlasting. So, for me spirituality is not only a belief, it is a knowing. And it is this connection with spirit that will make me do everything that seems to be impossible and turn ordinary moments into the legendary, and turn darkness into light.

Marieta says that the thing that strikes her during Sheryl's address is Sheryl's comment that I have the ability to begin the thinking that can transfigure 21st century exhaustion into a new-voiced, new-century energy.

I am given a scrapbook Marieta organises with messages that the Board and the staff have written and drawn for me. They fill their beautiful pages with heartfelt messages. They illustrate and design the pages with great care and I am sure that it takes a long time for them to do this. I thank Marieta for putting this wonderful book of memories together for me. I am humbled and self-conscious about the gifts they share with me but now I shall have their thoughts and feelings forever.

The present Board of Directors consisting of Sheryl, Frank, Hugh, Myrtle, Lutfia, Lisa and Michael share their memories with me in the scrapbook. Sheryl repeats her address in the scrapbook and adds a picture of herself smiling along with Caz and Lisa at my birthday party. The Board's and staff's pages are all illustrated with pictures, gold sparkles, bobbles, flowers, songs, reminiscences and their own drawings. They are thoughtful and beautiful and are all signed with love.

- **Hugh:** You have given strong leadership to Mosaic, yet you have been prepared to listen to other voices and accept the contrary views of others. You know I shall say that Mosaic could not have happened without the others, and this is true, but it is also true that nothing could have been achieved without you.

- **Myrtle:** Looking around me now I see that your achievement for Mosaic is very close to your first dream. It is an achievement with sustained determination.

- **Michael:** I feel very welcome and part of the organisation. Your ability to build allegiance and pride within the Board will be sorely missed.

- **Frank** gives me a magnificent hand painting and Chinese calligraphy representing Mosaic. He provides the translation “The trees full of life grow on each side of the river, bearing twelve crops of fruit monthly, and their leaves heal the nation”.

- **Lisa:** Thank you for allowing us to shine so brightly with Mosaic’s incredible work and vision.

- **Lutfia:** Our lives have been touched by your incredibly amazing spirit and passion. Thank you for this and for everything that you have done for women in our city and country.

- **Marieta:** We have been through so much during the time I have been with you at Mosaic. I have learnt so much from you especially thinking out of the box. Your warmth, love, humour and appreciation of people makes you special and this will make you remembered long after the work processes are forgotten. Thank you for trusting me to take over the reins and I shall do everything to maintain Mosaic’s unique character.

- **Riaan:** Thank you for helping me to grow as a person, for making me a part of your life and our wonderful organisation.

I am amazed to receive a wonderful letter from Harold Motshwane our funder from USAID. He also sends it on behalf of Jeff Bakken and Steven Snook his Team Leaders whom I also know so well. I am grateful that USAID and Mosaic now have trust in each other and our relationship is strong. Harold writes the following.

“When USAID advertised for applications we had no idea of what was out there. We received one hundred applications that suggested innovative ways to deal with gender based violence. Mosaic’s application stood head-and-shoulders above the others.

USAID fell in love with the innovativeness of ideas promised by Mosaic.

Rolene, throughout your relationship with USAID you have exhibited a kind of knowledge and intimacy in dealing with gender based violence issues that most of us from the donor world do not know. You have assisted us in shaping our strategy, shared with our partners without any fee your vast wealth of experience in the solutions to Gender Based Violence. Some of these partners express their sincere gratitude. You have availed yourself even at short notice to go on project visits to project sites. You have even provided information at short notice for our reporting. The concise nature of your reporting has enabled USAID to get accolades from Washington.

We would like to thank you for making sure that all those bruised, battered and tortured women have full access to the courts, have access to professional counselling, and that the police, justice officials and ordinary people understand that women have rights. USAID is really proud of you and all your deeds at Mosaic throughout the years. We know that you will always be there for the abused and battered women.

We hope that those remaining behind at Mosaic will burn the torch with more vigour and enthusiasm. We are hopeful that that the strange partnership that you have started with the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development is carried forward to the fullest.”

God Bless.

I am so emotional when I read Harold’s note to me. I thank USAID for strongly supporting Mosaic after our difficult experiences and humiliation experienced with USAID and Peter and Linda Biehl all those years ago.

Then our Admin Workers, our Social Auxiliary Workers and our Court Workers write messages for me. Each one is filled with their loving spirit and as I read them they sing their songs of love to me.

- **Charmaine:** Whenever I had to make a difficult choice you made it easier for me to take that step. And God said “You need a

higher level.” I said “it is too high, I cannot fly”. And God said “Look I shall give you Rolene, she will be your wings in the sky.”

- **Sonia:** No matter where you go or who you become may you never forget that we are your friends telling you how much you are missed and loved by us.

- **Dawn:** Rolene you have sown the seeds and nurtured us into beautiful flowers that shall continue to bear fruits and bring beauty into other people’s lives. She signs her page “Done with great love and appreciation by Dawn.”

- **Mia:** I am taking the positive manner in which I look at difficulties that I come across. You will always be an inspiration to me.

- **Noxolo:** Thank you for making me the person that I am today. I shall always admire you for that. You are such an angel and have a better understanding of building people like me. You really did what God sent you to do. I love myself, am sure of myself though it wasn’t easy to do. But you did it very politely and you did not have pride after all that good work. That is why I respect you.

- **Hilda:** You made me appreciate what I have and nurture it. You have brought hope in my life. You made me realise that there is no failure except in no longer trying. I am who I am today because of your support and encouragement.

- **Primrose:** I want to say thank you again for your God-given talent to benefit a lot of people’s lives, their families and the government. The knowledge that you have left us with will help in future generations. You have given people hope so that they can change negativity into positivity. May God give you strength to face challenges that would come your way. God Bless You.

- **Caroline:** I see you in a different light. So many words yet not enough time. Truth becomes you and to me you are the source

of inspiration. You are peace of mind. I dare to keep the voice I hear in my head. The eye opener to the blind. The feeling of my heart. You are the wing to my advice, the mother of the nation. Caregiver and engineer of peace. The mender of broken hearts. A mother with the passion for survival. The prophecy of tomorrow. You will always be in my life. Thank you Rolene.

- **Lulu:** Dear Rolene to me you've been a God-send from Heaven. The very first time I met you, you were a blessing to me. When I think of how my life would have been if Mosaic did not come to my rescue I would have died before my time. You have done a great job for our community and Mosaic during your spell as leader. You are the source of inspiration. I shall always pray for you. You have been a mother, a sister, a teacher and a counsellor to me and I salute you for that. May God richly bless you. I love you so much.

- **Lungiswa:** Somewhere in the scriptures it is written "there will be no more tears, no more sorrows, nor pain" and that is what you brought to me in my life during my time of misery and pain. You taught me to free myself from the chains of slavery. Helped me to understand the lessons that I have always chosen to learn down on this earth. Today I know very well who Lungiswa is trapped in this body. I admire you and will never forget you. Amen.

- **Sheilla:** Thank you for believing in me. You have made me a positive woman. You have given me the spirit of Ubuntu. You have made my dream come true. Thank you for trusting me. Today I am proud of myself because of you. Thank you so much Rolene I love you.

- **Nomvuzo:** Symbolic and kind. You are a tree providing shade to my life and also protecting me in the strong winds blowing in my face. You are an umbrella preventing me from heavy rains. God Bless You. You are a hen covering its chickens, so supportive. I remember you when I lost my son.

- **Zoleka:** God has brought you out to us for a reason. He made it because you are blessed. I salute you. I love you but more appropriately God loves you best. Be blessed and know that you are one with the spirit of God. May the Lord keep watch between us when we are away from each other? You are so kind and so special. And she ends off by saying “for every blessing, a blessing is required so bless another by passing this on.”

- **Jean:** You are an empathising, caring and healing person. I realised this when I lost my son in 1999. It was so hurtful but you made me realise the reality. You made me accept the reality without harming me. I respect you for who you are. God bless you”. And she signs off with kisses and pastes little diamonds with the words of “carer special and healer” written on the page.

- **Leonorah:** You will always be in my heart. Your voice will be on my ears and my eyes will see you no matter where you will be and what you will be doing. Under her picture she writes “Look how big my smile is, you must know that is because of you. What a mother sister friend and there are times that she becomes a child. I admire and adore you. You deserve to be respected – woman with wisdom and inspiration. This is my message to you Rolene.”

And my Court Workers write short beautiful messages to me and I am thrilled to receive them.

- **Xoliswa:** I want to say thank you for the incredible job you have done in my life. You are an amazing woman that I never thought I would meet in my life. Through your training I have learned and experienced a lot. God Bless you.

- **Lumka:** You play an important role in my life. I appreciate your kindness to me and I also enjoy working with you all these years.

- **Abbie:** Dear Rolene you will be sadly missed. You have been a parent, a teacher and a guide to us. May you live a long life.

- **Maria October:** You have entered my life at the right moment. Thank you for everything.

- **Terry:** Thank you Rolene for everything you have done to my life. Today I am what I am because of your skills and love. Stay as you are. God Bless you.

- **Nurie:** Thanx for being who you are. The day you were born the angels were really present and it is proven by the day you started Mosaic, giving healing. Thanx for being the cause of all our growth. I cannot thank you enough and the space is too short.

- **Gwenneth:** For the years I have been with Mosaic you were always there encouraging, teaching, empowering. Thank you for that. It was a stepping stone for me to become confident, coming out of my shell. I love you for doing this.

- **Charlotte:** This message is for you. May God be with you every step that you take and each decision that you make. May he protect you when you fall and may he hear you when you call, May you receive just as you give and May life be good to you, your friendship is loyal and true, I love you and appreciate all that you have done.

- **Anita:** Thank you for making us a part of Mosaic by giving us all our necessary skills. You are the one who helped and taught us to pick up the broken pieces of our lives. We can take these assertiveness skills where ever we go. Thank you again. We salute you.

- **Winnie:** Thank you ever so much for being such a wonderful director to me. Not only do you offer us amazing skills and advice given for free. I wish to clap my hands in admiration for the strides you've taken to be where you are today. I also salute the Mosaic team for their warmth and kindness. Long live Rolene long live. Thank you for your love.

- **Penny:** Thank you for your vigorous approach to empowering women especially around improvement in women's and children's rights. I feel quite honoured to be part of the Mosaic clan. Thank you for the past two years and of course the second chance you have given me with Mosaic. These skills I can take with me wherever I shall find myself. They are life lessons. Thank you once again.

The other members of Staff and the Court Workers give me their words of "Appreciation" which they all sign.

"Appreciation is an easy word to use but difficult to show. How often do we say that we appreciate Rolene's friendship, her love, her caring, for giving us our education and her ears that listen to us? Do we show appreciation to her who led and influenced us to a deeper faith in our work?

Do we appreciate the fact that Rolene has put us where we are today with all her skills, support, love and her education that she gives to us. We tend to take it for granted that our leader has to do so. We shy away from showing our feelings. Rolene taught us to appreciate ourselves, success and most of all to appreciate each other. And the fact that God can use her too, to do the work just as she is. Rolene Miller we appreciate you!

Lastly **Martine** summarises all the years that she works with me at Mosaic. It brings back so many memories and I am astounded by what she remembers. I value Teen and all that she did for me and Mosaic during the years that she was with us.

Mommy,

I started as your volunteer making photocopies during my lunch break. I remember so many things about Mosaic while I was with you. Meeting the 1st group of community workers after they were selected. The Board meeting when they appointed me "full time". The start of Mosaic working in Clifton and then operating from the Sea Point flat. I remember carrying bank bags full of money – everything was manual – into Gugulethu so I could pay the community workers their transport money. The staff signing IOU's for wages and personal loans to staff. I remember sneaking out of your flat at 6am to go home after faxing invitations to Mosaic's

Mayoral breakfast working all night long. Insisting on hand delivering Annual Reports. Typing up endless training handouts. I drove you batty when I insisted on calculating the exact number of photocopies per course for the 1st Community Chest proposal. Statistics, trainees and volunteers all to deal with.

The excitement that we had when Pick 'n Pay and Woolworths sponsored Mosaic banners and we displayed them and marched proudly in the streets with them. Getting the Global Fund for Women's proposal before Marieta joined us. The Mbekweni Youth programme and receiving money from the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund. Awards and recognitions.

I have amazing memories. The launch of our Centre and the Domestic Violence Protection Order booklet of *'It's an Order'*. You and Marieta rushing off in the pouring rain to find a Mosaic centre that DG Murray sponsored for us.

I remember the Ida Moskow Fund to benefit our poorest client and the Court Support Desks and Clerk supervision. Our 1st Pioneers for Peace ceremony. The fundraising concerts. Going on radio interviews and having Mosaic in the paper. Making the Women of Courage video with Jenny. The dream of our Community Workers becoming Social Auxiliary Workers. Letting the 2nd group of community workers go and how sad we were. I'll never forget when you sat at the bottom of the staircase and I told you that we got the first Social Services Department funding. We were so excited. Do you remember the 1st Strategic Planning session and how it featured a futuristic CENTRE! And now we have our centre.

We had bags of donated children's clothing in my bathroom that people had sent to us and that had to be distributed to our community workers for their clients. Packets of food and the Tree of Joy food and vouchers being collected and delivered into the community. I remember being proud of every new achievement.

I remember when our Community Workers didn't tell us that they were pregnant until the babies were almost here! The first children born to Nomvuzo and Leonorah. The sadness of our Judy's illness and the deaths of Judy and Nomvuzo's Sipho both buried on the same day.

I remember Safmarine purchasing reconditioned containers as an option for counselling centres to be placed in the community and then painting them purple. I learnt Xhosa songs, was given a Makoti party before Larry and I got married. The community workers were at my bridal shower and they celebrated with us.

I remember us making Angels at Christmas time. Trev making Xhosa Christmas cards for our staff. I remember Larry and me transporting community workers in the Combi and our cars. I went into areas I would never have considered going into before Mosaic.

I saw you turn MOSAIC into a force to be reckoned with. You taught a work ethic and about love and turned them all into your family. They are a power-house of women who are superbly trained.

I was at MOSAIC for five and a half years and it went by so fast. I am so glad to have shared half your tenure as Executive Director with you. I was also part of it once – thanks to you.

Women from all religions and social groups view you as a mentor, sister and mother. I remember how much Gran and Grandpa loved MOSAIC and supported it.

I was there when you celebrated and when people disappointed you. Mosaic owes you for it was built on your imagination. It will always be a part of you. You have left a legacy which is recognised and valued. You are an inspiration.

With love, Teen

I have never, ever, received such a magnificent gift as this scrapbook with their wonderful personal gift of their feelings for me. I am in awe and I feel so appreciated and valued. Today I want to thank each one of our Mosaic's members who were the incredible Board of Directors, my daughter, Mosaic's funders and my outstanding previous staff members for remembering me in very personal ways.

Today I have to absorb the enormity of everyone's feelings. It is scary. It is too big to think that I have been a catalyst for such spiritual love, growth and empowerment in each one of them. I am truly privileged to know how everyone observes me. How could I be so significant in so many of their lives?

Their truthful messages have forced me not to deny as I have always done, that I have been instrumental in such deep and honest changes in each one of them. It was much easier for me to say to the staff “Come on girls, properly know your skills and let’s get on with the business of healing and serving our abused women clients.”

What a privilege to leave such a legacy. A legacy not in the organisation or the services but in these amazing teachers and healers. It is only through loving and believing in them and demanding the best that they can be, that we have arrived here together. At that moment, and in that moment, I really did not acknowledge my profound personal contribution to all of them. We did it together. I trained them and they learnt and served the community.

I shall page through this scrapbook when I am alone and then I can feel and remember who I am in their eyes.

Today in our last supervision I tell them that when I arrived home after the party I read their exquisite notes and I cried. They tell me that some of their children helped them to illustrate their pages and they enjoyed doing it so much. I thank them once more and ask them to thank their children.

They say that they are going to show me what they are capable of and that they can now fly. It seems as if my leaving them will unlocked their potential. I am hoping that this will happen. They know that we shall keep in personal touch and check up on each other from now on.

Today as I leave Mosaic for the last time, I think of the various awards that I have received for my work with Mosaic. Amongst other certificates and rewards, there was the Rotary International Paul Harris Award, the Finalist of the Woman of Worth 2003 (Cape Times, V&A Waterfront), Finalist of the Woman of the Year 2004 (Lions International) and the Nobel Peace Prize nominee for the Campaign 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005.



*My parents and Martine with me when I receive the
Rotary International Paul Harris Award*

Thank you God. I am forever grateful to be able to leave something wonderful in this world. When I return to you I shall be overawed before you and thank you over and over again for allowing me to be instrumental in creating your Magical place called Mosaic. Thank you for all the women whose footsteps followed me to Mosaic and for all the people who they have supported and healed from abuse. They will all leave remarkable footprints in this world.

Before I leave the office, I kiss and hug Sonia at reception. She has been so loyal to me during my time as her Executive Director. She is very sad and she knows that I am leaving Mosaic for good. It is finally and regrettably for the last time.

I walk to my car and I head off for home. I take a last look at Mosaic as I drive by. I cannot believe that it is really my parting and my devastating Goodbye.

After I leave Mosaic I buy a new home in Bantry Bay and settle into it. Sea Point is never my home as it was the Mosaic office for many years so I am not afraid of moving. My new home has a small room filled with sunlight and where I find myself sitting at my desk each day in front of my computer and journaling. My room is a safe place to write, to cry and to come to terms with the new chapter in my life. It is my little haven and I do a lot of thinking and meditating trying to restore my mind, my body and my soul.

My cats Misty and Suzi keep me company. Misty looks at me when I cry and he does not like to see me crying. He tries to sit on my computer in front of me and I have to put him back on the desk again. Then he drapes himself around my neck as my scarf. He always makes me laugh.

It is Tuesday the 3rd of May 2005. It is my first day of 'freedom'. Today I need to fill out a form to open an account and when I fill in my occupation I put 'housewife'. It shocks me and disempowers me. Until two months ago I had a full time occupation as a proud and vibrant Executive Director. But what am I now? Who am I? What can I write?

I am slipping and sliding over this boundary between Mosaic and Me. Although I am nominated for the 1,000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize because of what I accomplished at Mosaic I find it difficult to acknowledge it.

Now the old book with all the chapters of the last part of my life is closing. The new book is waiting to be opened and to be filled with the chapters that will belong to the next part of my life. I feel as if the book is an open slate and I have to fill it. I can only manage to fill it day by day. I cannot plan for the future.

On Saturday I have all my community workers for tea. We have such a wonderful time together. They are all beautifully dressed and I am so happy to have my friends back with me again. We hug, we laugh and the joy is palpable. Over tea and cake we speak about what

they are doing and what I am doing. We speak about Mosaic. I am really so proud of them for standing up for themselves. We shall soon meet again. We need to share our company as we enrich each other's lives.

I keep in touch with Hilda, Leonorah, Lulu, Jean, Zoleka and Noxolo and they keep in touch with me. We meet for tea sometimes at Hilda's house or mine. We just laugh like the 'old times'. We reminisce and hark back to how we all were in the early days. These times are healing and fun and they energise us to carry on.

Samila

In 2006 Hilda calls me and wants to meet with me. She needs to talk about an important issue. Over lunch at a small restaurant Hilda tells me she is leaving Mosaic. She wants to create another organisation like Mosaic but this time she wants to work with men. She wants to stop the abuse from the 'source of the abuse; and educate men and male youth about how to treat women. She will counsel women who are abused but she wants to start a Men's Imbizo Programme and interact with as many men as possible.

I love and admire Hilda and I trust her work ethic. She is enthusiastic and earnest in her sharing. After much discussion about the proposed organisation I tell Hilda that I shall help her to set it up. It cannot be like Mosaic. I cannot put my own money into the organisation. I shall try to get funding but it has to be a small organisation and it can only serve people in Khayelitsha. Hilda is excited and we have to start from the beginning all over again. I walk away from our meeting with some trepidation in my heart. Am I getting involved in another organisation similar to Mosaic? I must be crazy. Strangely it is what Sheryl said I must do, to take Mosaic skills elsewhere.

Hilda wants to call the organisation Samila which means 'we are rooted'. It represents strong roots enabling it to spread out and grow in the community. It is also the name of Hilda's granddaughter.

Hilda and I co-found Samila. Hilda is the Executive Director and I am the Chairperson of the Board. I contact Marianne our design artist who worked with me at Mosaic and she comes up with a beautiful logo for Samila. We manage to rent a small office in Khayelitsha. We manage to receive money from the Department of Social Development. In 2006 Samila is registered as an NGO and Section 21 Company.

Fortunately I have contacts with all the important people that she would need to start her organisation. Thus we begin a seven year period of serving and expanding Samila together.

From the start Hilda is the only Social Auxiliary Worker serving the community and I am there to support and supervise her. Everything is perfect and Hilda receives many messages from successful clients whom she helped. However, Sylvia a woman who works in an office across the way from Samila is interested in working with abused women and men and she joins as a volunteer. She does not know about abuse and Hilda takes her around and teaches her how to educate, run support groups and run workshops.

I collect together my personal friends to stand on the Board of Samila and to direct it over the years. Our Board meetings are held in Khayelitsha and I am excited to serve in the community again.

After two years Noxolo also leaves Mosaic and applies for the position as Samila's Youth Worker. We are so excited and happy to have Noxolo on Samila's staff. She makes contact with the schools in Khayelitsha and she educates the youth and counsels them.

Lulu is at retirement age and she leaves Mosaic and joins Samila as our receptionist and counsellor. They are both well trained and their work with Hilda progresses perfectly. At supervision they are all happy to share as we did in Mosaic. They are good friends who have been through so much together.

After seven years of working with Samila, Sharon who becomes the Executive Director in 2013 and Sylvia the volunteer, both squeeze Hilda and me out of our positions. They betray Samila. It is very hard for Hilda and for me but we realise that we have to leave Samila. It is crazy. An organisation that we successfully started is now floundering in the townships. Unfortunately we cannot take responsibility as we do not have control.

However we know that God has the Grand Plan and we had to start Samila together and do all the good work with abused women, men and youth. We both did the best we could do whilst we were still there and now it has to go the way God planned it to go.

Hilda and I visit and call each other and find out how we are doing. Again we meet up with our old members of Mosaic's staff and enjoy ourselves laughing, talking and being together over cups of tea and cake. They are very supportive of Hilda and I am happy that she has such a loving, support system.

Farewells

In 2006 Jean calls me and says that she is leaving Mosaic. She is now employed by the Department of Social Development and is pleased that she got this appointment. She wants me to know that she will keep in touch with me and her friends from Mosaic. I am happy for Jean. Sonia and Mia also leave while Hilda re-joins Mosaic as a contract worker for a year.

Josephine calls me. Sheilla is in the Intensive Care Unit in the final stages of AIDS. I immediately visit Sheilla who is surprised and happy to see me. My beautiful and caring Sheilla who has served her community so admirably and well. Our Sheilla with her deep and resonate voice and her childlike nature. I visit Sheilla several times and help her to be more comfortable. I am shocked by the state of the Hospital. There is no linen and the linen room has completely empty shelves. Sheilla does not have a pillow to lie on let alone a sheet or a blanket. The last time I see Sheilla she is in great pain. All I can do is sit with her and try to comfort her.

The Mosaic staff invite me to deliver an address to a Memorial service for Sheilla on the 27th November 2007. I tell everyone that when I first met Sheilla more than twelve years ago she was one of my first community workers. I loved her from the first moment that we met. There was a soft vulnerability and a huge kindness in Sheilla that everyone felt when they were in her presence. Sheilla had a heart as big as herself and she loved and was loved so deeply in return. She personified kindness and would do anything for anyone who was kind to her. To have friends you have to be a friend and Sheilla was the best friend ever.

Her Mosaic sisters and I were soul sisters. Mosaic's outstanding community workers became powerful healers, leaders and trainers. Sheilla was totally professional and committed and gave to her abused clients her caring support and understanding that gave them courage to look at their abuse and make plans to change their lives for the better. People looked up to Sheilla with respect yet she never

lost her sense of modesty and gratitude that she could heal and be there for others. Sheilla is with God and is out of her suffering and at peace. She is singing with the Angels in heaven looking down and protecting all of her loved ones here in this difficult schoolroom that we call earth.

I go to Sheilla's house on the day of the funeral and join in the prayers and hymns that are sung before she is moved to the church in Nyanga. Sheilla's deep and resonate voice is missing. Oh how I miss it. Sheilla's coffin is placed in front of the congregation in the church and protected by four people who stand at the corners of her coffin. People change after each hymn and Marieta and I stand there too.

Then Mia calls me. Caroline is very ill in hospital with diabetes. The second of my trainers who trained the second group of Community Workers is now passing away. Again I am so upset. Mia and I visit her and her face lights up with a smile. We laugh quietly when she recalls how I used to buy big bottles of cough mixture for everyone so that they would not get sick in the winter but they had to bring their glass bottles back for refills. When she told her friends about this, they said that they do not know any other organisation where the staff are looked after the way that they were looked after. She laughs at me again when she says I told them to take a small blanket to put over their knees in the ice cold courts. 'How can you take a blanket to court?' She also remembers I told everyone to take dry shoes in a bag on rainy days to change into if their shoes got wet. I did not think it was strange but obviously Caroline and everyone else did. We really cared for each other and this was the secret of our success. The laughter and fun we had. The difficulties that we got through. So long ago. So sad for me once more. My heart bursts with pain in remembering the two of them in vibrancy and full of life. And I ache in the vulnerability and shortness of life. Those wonderful years in Mosaic are truly over. Time has taken these energetic and effective women away. Things will never be and can never be the same again.

I ask her how many people she has helped through the years when she was with Mosaic. We estimate thousands of abused lives that have been changed forever because of the gift of healing that

Caroline has passed on to others. Caroline says that she could not do this work without her faith. She finishes off by saying that at Mosaic we learn how to connect to God. She is so grateful. And so am I.

I speak at her funeral on the 22nd June 2013. I say that I know that you are not resting in peace Caroline. I know that you are very busy helping all those souls who need your caring and compassion in Heaven and I know that you are deeply fulfilled and happy where you are now.

Then Sally calls me. Our precious little energetic Nomvuzo is the final stage of AIDS. What is happening to our invincible group of wonderful women? When we are together in 1995 in our busy days of teaching, training and serving in the community we think that we shall be together forever but we are slowly crumbling away. Sally and I find Nomvuzo and Zoleka in her bedroom in Macassar. She is surprised to see us. We talk, share stories and laugh sadly about what has happened to our staff at Mosaic. At last we hug each other goodbye and Sally and I make our way out of Macassar. We are both terribly sad to see what has happened to Nomvuzo. She passes away soon after our visit.

At Nomvuzo's memorial service I share how passionate and amazing Nomvuzo has always been. I relate how she came to Mosaic not knowing how to speak English but she persevered and quickly learnt the language. How brave she was when she lost Sipho and how we all admired her for her courage. I remember how she loved to grow vegetables and plants and how successful she was working with Sally and Zoleka in the Permaculture project. But Nomvuzo was more than all of this. She was a wonderful Social Auxiliary Worker and she healed so many abused women during the time that she was with Mosaic. She loved her family and friends. We were specially blessed to know Nomvuzo and we shall miss her terribly. I love her so much.

Then Lungiswa who is blind because of her diabetes is hospitalised from a stroke in 2017. Hilda, Leonorah and I visit her. She is sleeping when we stand beside her bed but she soon turns her head and opens her eyes-that-cannot-see. We talk about the times gone by. When I ask her if she remembers the time when she walked to class in her broken shoes because she did not have money to buy

bread for her children she says “Yes Rolene I remember it well”. Lungiswa who also strongly believes in her God passes soon after our visit.

Mosaic’s first Court Worker Ulanda very sadly also passed away. Ulanda was a wonderfully warm and compassionate person and she was close to us all. I thank you Ulanda for your superb work helping so many of our abused women in the Court Support Desks in court.

For all of us this world is a better place because of Sheilla, Caroline and Nomvuzo, Lungiswa and Ulanda. They invested themselves in all of us and we invested ourselves in them. I thank God for them and for their lives and work that they shared with us. Mosaic was able to heal and change the thousands of lives of abused women in the community because of them. Hambani Amakhosikazi our beautiful woman. Go safely. We love you forever. The losses mount up for me. I cannot bear to hear of another one of my women who is going to pass away

Mosaic Comes of Age

In 2010 and after five years as the Executive Director Marieta leaves Mosaic. She is succeeded by four new Executive Directors who come and go after short periods of time. They do more harm than good, and Mosaic suffers terribly.

In 2014 I am asked by Mosaic to attend Mosaic's 21st Anniversary party. Mosaic was registered in November 1993 and it has survived for twenty one years. In 1993 whoever would have thought that this could happen and that I would still be present? I am asked to address the invited guests and Mosaic's staff at the celebration. Martine, Trevor and Myrtle are together with me at Mosaic. I progress through our herstory and what we have achieved from the inception of Mosaic. I thank them all for allowing me to reminisce with them over all these years. It is a great privilege.

Three Directors of Mosaic attend the anniversary function: me, Marieta and the present appalling Executive Director. When the beautifully iced 21st Anniversary cake is put down in front of me I ask Marieta and the Executive Director to cut it with me. Everyone sings Happy Anniversary and pictures are taken. They give us bunches of flowers. There are hugs and kisses from the staff. They feel that Mosaic's 21st Anniversary is a success.

Life goes on, for me and for Mosaic.

On the 16th January 2015. I have a stroke. The right side of my body and my speech are affected.

People ask me why I had a stroke and I tell them that I definitely know 'why'. They do not expect my answer. For years and months I have asked God to please calm my mind. I am so busy and every day I am exhausted. I take on responsibility for others and I beg God to help calm me down. So God gives me a stroke and that certainly calms me down. It is a huge relief. I am now at the mercy of my friends and family. However I will not let them have power and control over me. I shall decide what to do and how to do it. I will be strong again.

I am in High Care for two weeks and Trevor my son is concerned and keeps in touch and visits me with flowers. Martine and my beautiful grandchildren bring me cards and pictures of them which I put next to my bed. I receive notes and flowers from friends and family, from the staff at Mosaic and from St Luke's Hospice where I ran a support group for the nursing sisters. Two of my special nursing sisters from St Luke's come to see me. I share what I can with my diminished vocabulary and language with friends and family who visit me. I feel very spoilt and loved.

Then I return home. I have someone to care for me during the day until I decide that I do not need her anymore. After three weeks at home I am on my own. Teen drives me from session to session of therapy. I am grateful to her because if it was not for Teen's help I would be in great trouble. I take physiotherapy sessions and occupational therapy sessions. I will not let anyone do things for me if I can do them for myself.

Linda my friend quickly and fortunately diagnoses my stroke as I have it. She gives me speech therapy. My speech is slow and I have to find the right words to make meaning. I have to form my sentences one word at a time. I cannot speak easily through to the end of a sentence. I do not know how the sentence will end. Linda and I laugh because I cannot distinguish the meanings of different words. When I have to give the meaning of the word 'left', I keep on repeating that left is left and right is right. But I forget that it can also mean that 'I left something behind'. Words become amazing revelations to me once more.

After four weeks Martine chauffeurs me to my doctor. He says I will have to wait for two years before things will improve. I am thoroughly depressed. At the weekend I sit in my lounge looking at the trees in my garden. I ask myself "What am I going to do for the next two years?"

However, my mind is resolute. I shall learn to speak properly again. I am stubborn. I decide that in six months I am going to drive again and I shall function perfectly once more. I have been so active and there is no way that I shall be disabled and incapacitated by a silly stupid stroke. I shall not give in. I still have my sense of humour and

I can laugh at myself. It is a totally new experience for someone who had all her wits about her a few week ago.

While I am in my stroke filled days I feel like I am living in a huge white cocoon or a duvet. I feel encapsulated. The tiny seed that lies inside of me, that is the true essence of me, has to push out through the dense cocoon covering me to be whom I really am. Each day I push myself 'out' like an unborn chick pushing at my shell so I can be born again. I have to be better. Life has to be lived as the 'new capable me'.

In March 2016 and six weeks after my stroke I get a call from a very worried Riaan. There is trouble with the present awful Executive Director of Mosaic and her dreadful Board of Directors who support her. Riaan and I ask Michael our Labour Lawyer and Mosaic's long-time Trustee to join the meeting. Michael has not been active with Mosaic for many years and he asks why he is the only original Trustee and Board member left at Mosaic. We laugh with him.

We look at the original document for Mosaic's registration as an NGO and discover that the problem for the present Board of Directors is that they are not really the 'Board'. When they were elected they did not change the names of the original Trustees who signed for the registration of Mosaic in 1993.

Michael calls for an extraordinary Annual General Meeting in four days' time. Riaan and I have to scurry around and become detectives as we track down the original trustees who now live all over the world. Michael chairs the AGM and explains that we need to have a new Board of Trustees to register Mosaic properly. At this AGM I read out the Trustees' proxies that we fortunately receive in time for the meeting. I also read out the names of my friends who will become the new Board of Mosaic. As I speak at the meeting I can hear that my voice is weak and wobbly but I persevere.

Then surprisingly during his address Michael asks me to be the new Chairperson of the Board. How can I be the new Chairperson of the Board so soon after my stroke? I am not 'compos mentis' yet. I look up and I see all these wonderful Mosaic women staring into my eyes and visibly begging me to accept the position. I have to say "Yes I will be the Board's Chairperson."

Five months after my stroke I take a driving test and I drive again. What a miracle. I can do things for myself. I feel so extraordinarily chuffed. I am doing well. Thank you God.

With our new registration as an MOI, I can no longer be a member of the Board of Directors. I am now registered as the Founder Member of Mosaic along with Michael and my friend Beryl who also stand as Mosaic's Members.

After two Board meetings I hand over to another Board member to be the Chairperson as I tire too quickly. Some of my friends resign but three friends remain on the Board. We need more Board members to make decisions. I ask my friend Majid to join the Board and he is great. One day I meet a wonderful woman named Tarisai Mchuchu and I ask her to please join the Board. Tarisai brings Maxine onto the Board and I become even happier. Our Board is now expanding with wonderful people serving on it and making decisions for Mosaic.

As Tarisai and I talk on the first day that we meet I say that I want her to put something onto a shelf at the back of her mind. I want her to think about becoming Mosaic's Executive Director one day. She is warm, bright and accomplished and she listens carefully. I believe that she has a heart that will take care of Mosaic. She is also graduating to become an advocate. However she is involved with another project at this time but I tell her that I am patient and I want her for Mosaic. I feel like I have known her forever.

In August 2017 we have Mosaic's first Annual General Meeting since Mosaic becomes an MOI and when I am the Founder Member of Mosaic. It is a warm and wonderful AGM just like we had in our 'old and beginning' times. Our Mistress of Ceremonies is Ruth from our Thuthusela Centre which is run by Mosaic and is our Centre where Ruth and her colleagues help and support rape victims. Ruth says that she never thought that one day she could be an MC, but she is wonderful and conducts herself with such confidence and dignity.

All of the seventy members of staff sing and dance our Xhosa songs in front of their chairs and in the aisles. They whole-heartedly enjoy themselves and my heart swells with pride and love for them. Our Board members also enjoy themselves. At the end of the AGM

Mosaic's previous Chairperson says that she does not want the AGM to end.

Tarisai addresses us as our Guest Speaker. We are proud of her as she has knowledge of abuse and is a strong empowered woman. She talks about playing in the streets of Khayelitsha as a child and that now we cannot let our children play in the streets because they are not safe. She talks about abuse and how we all try to stop it. She gives an important address about building Mosaic into becoming an organisation that has proper structure and rises again to the forefront of recognised organisations serving abused people.

The Chairperson of the Board summarises her Report from the Annual Report. She tell us that she cannot stand as Chairperson of the Board as she is inundated with work. We thank her for her services and we wish her well.

I rise to give my Founder Member's Report and I keep a secret hidden from the staff that I only deliver at the end of my report. I introduce the Board members to the staff and visitors. I thank our funders who attend the AGM for keeping us going because without their funding we cannot continue to deliver our services for abused people. With Mosaic's vastly increased expenses we still need funding today so that Mosaic does not experience bankruptcy as we did in the past.

I finally share that we could not have established Mosaic without the support, love and encouragement of our family and friends and Mosaic colleagues. However we could not have started and developed Mosaic without the faith, love, guidance, strength and support from our magnificent God. Thank you God.

At the end of my Report and with such delight I tell our staff and our guests that we now have 'two' new Executive Directors of Mosaic. From today onward they will Co-Direct Mosaic and they will look after all of them in Mosaic. They all look surprised and they wait cautiously for me to continue.

Then I call Riaan to come forward. The staff clap out loudly and with great enthusiasm, love and care. Their voices rise joyously as he walks with modesty to the front and stands next to me. I tell everyone that Riaan will be our Director of Operation. There is more clapping and shouts of joy. They have wanted Riaan to direct them for many

years. They have great respect for Riaan and everyone is relieved. At last I can relax and know that Mosaic is protected by Riaan, my loyal and committed Riaan, who has steadfastly been with Mosaic for fifteen years.

Then I ask Tarisai to come forward as our Director of Institutional Advancement and the Co-Director of Mosaic. The staff clap with happiness and relief and are thrilled to eventually have two wonderful, bright and passionate people to direct Mosaic. They cannot be happier than me.

For the first time I feel utterly and completely safe. Mosaic feels safe. From the time I left Mosaic in 2005 I can feel safe again. So safe. Oh thank you God. How utterly amazing to feel safe and at peace and happy.



Tarisai and Riaan, Mosaic's present Executive Directors

The staff's spirit is amazing at the AGM and afterwards one of our Court Workers tells me that she has not enjoyed an AGM like this since we had them when I was at Mosaic. God and my parents are with us and all the Angels of Heaven are with us as well.

Then, on Monday 14th November 2018 Riaan asks me to go to Parliament with him the following day. Michael, a Member of Parliament introduces a motion without notice which has been

passed unanimously by Parliament to recognise the outstanding contribution I have made with the establishment of Mosaic.

I discover that only one other Jewish woman, Helen Suzman, has been so honoured in Parliament. I am stunned. What a spectacular honour for me.

Helen Suzman was a Member of Parliament for 36 years and for thirteen years she was the sole member of her party in Parliament. She was the only outspoken opponent of Apartheid, being ridiculed and attacked, but she stood her ground, giving as good as she got. Ultimately she gaining the respect of her enemies. Suzman's motto was 'Go and see for yourself.'

I can never ever put myself into the same category as Helen Suzman. But it was through my friend and another brave woman Helen Lieberman that I was able to go and see for myself the conditions of abused women in the townships and try to do something about it.

Now looking back, twenty five years after I have established Mosaic I have a great feeling of satisfaction at what we have accomplished. Mosaic's staff still deliver their daily presentations on Abuse and Gender Based Violence in community venues and educate many hundreds of thousands of people who are abused or who knows someone who is abused. They run support groups for abused people and Abuse and Assertiveness training workshops and Counselling sessions for abused clients. Our Mosaic Court Support Desks still operate in the Domestic Violence sections of fourteen Magistrate's courts in the Western Cape, and Magistrate's courts in Johannesburg and Pretoria in Gauteng and in Kwa-Zulu Natal. They are continually making a difference to the courts' services and to their abused clients' lives.

Mosaic has reached a million people since our inception. Abused women, youth and men who we serve and support with love and kindness appreciate and use Mosaic's information for their healing. Many of our clients pass Mosaic's information on to family and friends and the healing continues.

Abuse and Gender Based Violence are Dangerously Alive. They are damaging our already ravaged society. Tragically the problem is

no less serious today than it was twenty five years ago. There is still so much to be done and to be accomplished.

As I said when we first started Mosaic ‘Change will only come about through our Black women who stand together and support one another and say “We have had enough!” Women have a voice and they must be empowered to use it. It is only when this occurs that real change regarding Abuse and Gender Based Violence will happen in our society.

I pray that Mosaic will continue for another twenty five successful years of serving and healing the abused amongst us and it will continue to stop and prevent Abuse and Gender Based Violence from happening. When Mosaic celebrates its 50th anniversary celebrations I will be in ‘Spirit’ and with God. But I solemnly promise everyone who is still with Mosaic that I will be here with you in Spirit laughing, cheering, supporting and praying for you all.

Mosaic is our legacy. We will not stop healing abused people until they can put the pieces of their lives together or until abuse no longer exists in our humanity.

‘Amandla’ shouts: ‘Power!’

‘Womandla’ shouts ‘Women Power!’ Womandla amakosikazi! Womandla Mosaic!

Welcome 2018 and welcome to Mosaic’s exciting Twenty Fifth Anniversary Celebration. Long live Mosaic!

Our song of praise to God is forever ‘Hallelujah!’



Rolene Miller registered Mosaic, Training, Service and Healing Centre to empower abused women, and like a Mosaic ‘to put the broken pieces of their lives together and make their lives more beautiful,’

Womandla! Women Power! is an account of Mosaic’s Community Workers’ and Court Workers’ lives, training and services and Rolene’s writings describing the journey. Their humour and laughter is present whilst constantly moving through the difficult days at Mosaic.

This book describes Mosaic’s support from our caring God. It is a human story where honest values are realised and people’s lives are changed forever. It is for readers who want to know the ‘Herstory’ of a ground-breaking and innovative Mosaic working with abused women for 25 successful years and still surviving today.

‘Womandla! Women Power!’ belongs to everyone who in our patriarchal culture and society wants to prevent and stop Women Abuse and Domestic Violence and who needs to seriously and critically condemn it.

* * *

ROLENE MILLER is a Clinical Remedial Teacher, Social Worker and is the Founder Member of Mosaic. From 1995 until 2005 she was the Executive Director when she then resigned. She returned in 2016. She is presently developing Mosaic’s Training Programme on Abuse for Trainers to spread the healing process.



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